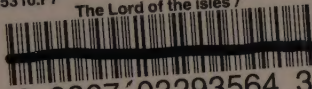


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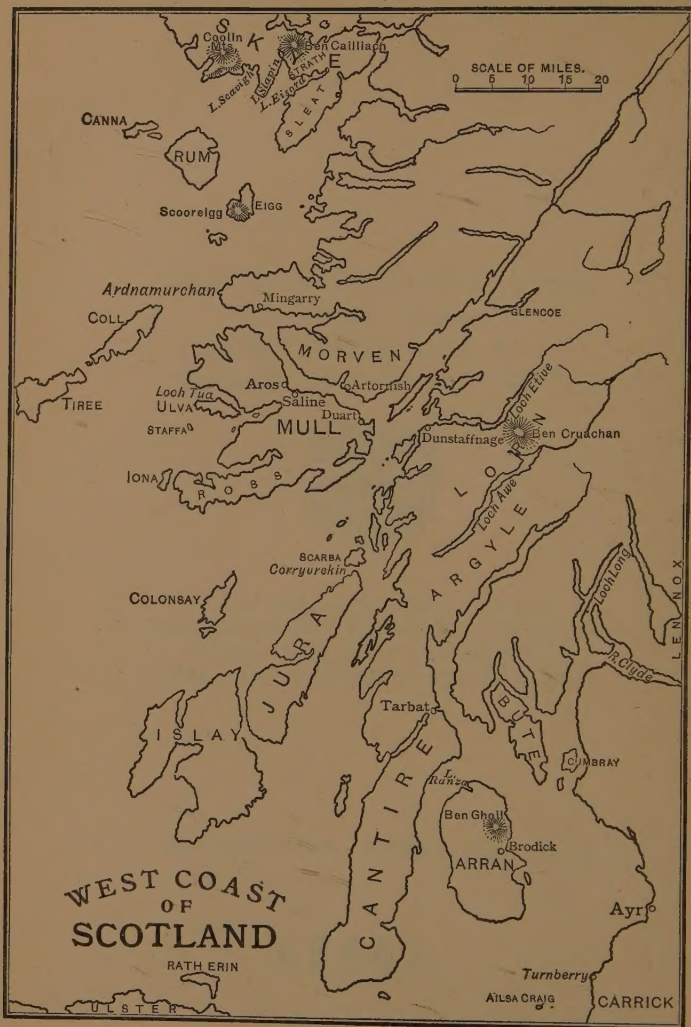
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SIR WALTER SCOTT

THE
LORD OF THE ISLES

EDITED

WITH INTRODUCTION NOTES AND GLOSSARY

BY

J. H. FLATHER M.A.

OF EMMANUEL COLLEGE

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CAMBRIDGE:
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS

1914

SIR WALTER SCOTT

born 1771

died 1832

The First Edition of the Lord of the Isles was published in 1815

PREFACE.

THE text of the *Lord of the Isles* adopted in the present edition is that given in the tenth volume of the collected edition of Sir Walter Scott's *Poetical Works* published under the editorship of Lockhart in 1833. The notes relating to historical and antiquarian matters have been chiefly extracted from Scott's notes on the poem. Etymologies are relegated to the Glossary. The plan of the battle of Bannockburn is drawn to illustrate Scott's account of the battle. Somewhat different plans will be found in Sir Herbert Maxwell's *Robert the Bruce* and in Mr Oman's *Art of War in the Middle Ages*, which adopts the view combated by Scott that Bruce's front faced south.

J. H. FLATHER.

CAMBRIDGE,

September 1902.

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INTRODUCTION.

WALTER SCOTT.

WALTER SCOTT was born at Edinburgh in 1771. A lameness resulting from a fever in infancy led to his being sent for the benefit of the country air to his grandfather's farm near Melrose, where he spent the greater part of his time until his eighth year. Here he heard from all around him songs and tales of the famous clan of Scott, to which he belonged, and of the old Border feuds and raids, and the Jacobite risings, in which they had played a part. The imaginative boy listened eagerly to these traditions, and, as he tells us in *Marmion*¹, peopled the neighbouring ruins of Smailholm Tower with imaginary moss-troopers:—

“Methought that still with tramp and clang
The gateway's broken arches rang;
Methought grim features, seam'd with scars,
Glared through the window's rusty bars,
And ever, by the winter hearth,
Old tales I heard of woe or mirth,
Of lovers' slights, of ladies' charms,
Of witches' spells, of warriors' arms;
Of patriot battles, won of old
By Wallace wight and Bruce the bold;
Of later fields of feud and fight,
When, pouring from their Highland height,
The Scottish clans, in headlong sway,
Had swept the scarlet ranks away.”

His residence in the country made him a healthy, sturdy boy, but did not cure his lameness. When he returned to

¹ *Marmion*, Introd. to Canto III. 187-201.

Edinburgh, he spent much of his leisure in reading aloud to his mother Pope's translation of Homer. "My mother used to make me pause upon those passages which expressed generous and worthy sentiments, and if she could not divert me from those which were descriptive of battle and tumult, she contrived at least to divide my attention between them. My own enthusiasm, however, was chiefly awakened by the wonderful and terrible—the common taste of children, but in which I have remained a child even unto this day. I got by heart, not as a task, but almost without intending it, the passages with which I was most pleased." In his eighth year he entered the Edinburgh High School, where he tells us that he made a brighter figure in the *yards*¹ than in the *class*, and that "in the winter play-hours my tales used to assemble an admiring audience round Lucky Brown's fireside, and happy was he that could sit next to the inexhaustible narrator." Before his fourteenth year, he had begun to read with delight Shakespeare and Spenser, and above all, Percy's *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*, a collection of old English and Scotch ballads and songs. When he first became acquainted with this book "the summer day sped onward so fast that notwithstanding the sharp appetite of thirteen, I forgot the hour of dinner, was sought for with anxiety, and was found still entranced in my intellectual banquet. The first time I could scrape a few shillings together, I bought unto myself a copy of these beloved volumes; nor do I believe I ever read a book so frequently, or with half the enthusiasm."

When Scott was fourteen years old, he entered the University of Edinburgh as a student, and at the same time was apprenticed to his father, who was a Writer to the Signet, in other words, a Scotch solicitor. Long excursions on foot or horseback to visit castles or abbeys or beautiful scenery formed his favourite amusement. He was industrious in his father's office, although he disliked the work; it was however decided that he should become an Advocate², and he was called to the

¹ play-ground.

² barrister.

bar in 1792. While he was slowly making his way at the bar he eagerly studied romantic literature and antiquities of all kinds; for seven successive years he made a raid, as he called it, into the wild district of Liddesdale, joining in the rough festivities of the farmers, and adding to the store of Border ballads and tales which he had been gathering ever since he was a child. In 1797 Scott, who was to write so many fine descriptions of fighting in verse and prose, gained his own military experience as quartermaster of a body of volunteer cavalry raised on account of the fear of a French invasion. We are told that in spite of his lameness he was a fearless rider; "his zeal and animation served to sustain the enthusiasm of the whole corps. At every interval of exercise the order, *Sit at ease*; was the signal for the quartermaster to lead the squadron to merriment."

In 1797 Scott married, and two years later he was appointed Sheriff of Selkirkshire. As this office required him frequently to hold courts of justice in Ettrick Forest, he found it convenient in 1804 to remove to Ashestiel, "a farm-house overhanging the Tweed and situated in a wild pastoral country." In 1802-3 he published his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, a collection of the ballads which he had for so many years been collecting, together with others written after the ancient models by himself and some of his friends.

The first of Scott's long narrative poems—of the same type as the *Lord of the Isles*—was the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805), in which a story of the fortunes of the Scott clan in Mary Queen of Scots' days serves "to illustrate the customs and manners which anciently prevailed on the Borders." Scott at once became a famous man—"in the history of British poetry nothing had ever equalled the demand for the *Lay*"—and it was evident that literature was to be the main business of his life. It was followed by *Marmion, a Tale of Flodden Field* (1808), the *Lady of the Lake*, a story of the western Highlands in the reign of James V (1810), *Rokeby*, a story of Teesdale in the time of the Civil War (1812), and the *Lord of the Isles*, published in January 1815.

In 1806 Scott had been appointed a Clerk of the Court of Session at Edinburgh, and in 1812 he quitted Ashestiel for a farm which he purchased on the Tweed; the surrounding scenery is described in the opening stanzas of the *Lord of the Isles*. Here he built the famous house of Abbotsford, where the visitor may still see his collection of ancient arms and curiosities, and his noble library. He let slip no chance of extending his little estate by purchase, and delighted to spend there every day on which he could escape from Edinburgh, joining in the sports of the countryside and entertaining the many distinguished persons who came to Scotland to visit the scenes which he had described.

Signs however were not wanting that Scott's narrative poems were losing their first charm for both the poet and his readers, and in 1814, just before he began to write the *Lord of the Isles*, he had broken fresh ground by publishing anonymously *Waverley*, the earliest of his great series of novels, the authorship of which he did not acknowledge until 1827, although their popularity even exceeded that of his poems. In 1820 he was made a baronet. In 1825 on the failure of a firm of printers it became known that Scott had for years been a partner, and that he was under an obligation to pay its debts to the extent of £117,000. Offers of assistance were made by his friends, but Scott, now in his fifty-fourth year, set himself resolutely to raise the whole amount by his pen. In eight years' time £87,000 of this debt had been paid, and the remaining £30,000 was produced by Scott's copyrights in the following fourteen years. But the struggle overtaxed his strength: in 1831 his health broke down, and it was decided that he must spend the winter abroad. He set sail for the Mediterranean in a frigate which the Government placed at his disposal, but it was too late for him to gain any material benefit from his tour, and in the following June he hastened back to his beloved Abbotsford, where he died on the 21st of September 1832.

Scott was not only a poet and a novelist; he was also an antiquarian and a historian, and when we add to the works mentioned above his editions of old poems and historical

documents, and of the works of Dryden and of Swift, his *Life of Bonaparte*, his shorter poems and tales, his reviews and political writings, we arrive at an astonishing mass of literature to be produced in a little more than thirty years by a man who had many other occupations. He wrote with extraordinary rapidity, and he is often censured for having been led into a habit of hasty composition by his desire to raise money for the extension of his estate at Abbotsford. The truth however seems to be that he could not exert his powers to advantage in any other way: when he was once engaged in the composition of a poem or a novel, he must complete it at his utmost speed and without pause. It is also to be remembered that, as we have endeavoured to shew in giving an account of his early years, he had been unconsciously preparing himself from infancy for his great task of interesting the world in the history of the past by means of his poems and novels.

In order to understand the enthusiasm with which Scott's narrative poems were received, we must remember that the writers of the preceding century appealed to the reason rather than the imagination; their great aim was to write with order, clearness, and elegance. The Middle Ages were regarded with a certain contempt, and the men of those days, as well as their architecture, were described as Gothic—that is, barbarous. Still in the latter part of the century a reaction was certainly setting in; among the signs of this may be mentioned the absurd romances on medieval subjects, full of ghosts and supernatural wonders, which although condemned by the critics, found readers. The public was thus ready to turn from the correct writers of the eighteenth century to Scott's poetical stories of adventure and warfare, which opened to its imagination the romantic days of feudalism.

Most poets are willing that their works should be regarded as the product of their unaided genius. Scott on the contrary appended to his longer poems a mass of notes, often considerably longer than the poem which they were intended to illustrate, and shewing how in its composition he had drawn from medieval poems and chronicles and documents and from traditions

surviving among the peasantry. Nothing could prove more clearly that Scott's main interest in writing was to make the past live once more in men's minds.

The effect of Scott's writings was not limited to Great Britain: he was the only one of our writers in the nineteenth century except Byron who exercised a deep influence on the development of European literature, awakening a love of romance and a quickened interest in the history of the Middle Ages: all modern writers of historical novels may be regarded as followers of Scott.

THE LORD OF THE ISLES.

In his selection of a subject Scott made amends for the offence which he had given to many Scotchmen by taking the battle of Flodden as the subject of *Marmion*. "I could hardly have chosen a subject more popular in Scotland than anything connected with the Bruce's history, unless I had attempted that of Wallace."

At the end of July 1814 Scott, having recently brought out *Waverley*, the first of his novels, accompanied the Commissioners of the Northern Lighthouses on a tour of inspection round the coast of Scotland. In the course of this cruise¹ he saw for the first time many of the places described in the poem; he had however visited the coast of Mull, Staffa, and Iona in 1810. Towards the close of the expedition, when off the coast of Ireland, they ran some risk of being captured by American privateers. "The voyage, which was in every other effect so delightful, was in its conclusion saddened by one of those strokes of fate which so often mingle themselves with our pleasures. The accomplished and excellent person² who had recommended to me the subject for 'The Lay of the Last Minstrel,' and to whom I proposed to inscribe what I already

¹ Described in a diary which forms chapters xxviii-xxxii of Lockhart's *Life of Scott*.

² The Duchess of Buccleuch. See *Lord of the Isles*, vi. 957-74.

suspected might be the close of my poetical labours, was unexpectedly removed from the world, which she seemed only to have visited for purposes of kindness and benevolence. It is needless to say how the author's feelings, or the composition of his trifling work, were affected by a circumstance which occasioned so many tears and so much sorrow. True it is, that the *Lord of the Isles* was concluded, unwillingly and in haste, under the painful feeling of one who has a task which must be finished, rather than with the ardour of one who endeavours to perform that task well. Although the Poem cannot be said to have made a favourable impression on the public, the sale of fifteen thousand copies enabled the author to retreat from the field with the honours of war."

By November 11th the first three Cantos of the *Lord of the Isles* were written, and the poem was finished by December 10th, and published in January 1815. As an instance of the rapidity with which Scott wrote, it may be mentioned that exactly two months after the revision of the poem for the press was completed, the novel of *Guy Mannering* was not only composed, but printed and published.

In February 1815 a review of the poem by Jeffrey, the most famous critic of the day, appeared in the *Edinburgh Review*. Many of Jeffrey's literary judgments are quite discredited nowadays, but passages from his criticism of the *Lord of the Isles* deserve quotation:—

"Here is another genuine lay of the great Minstrel—with all his characteristic faults, beauties, and irregularities. The same glow of colouring—the same energy of narration—the same amplitude of description—are conspicuous here, which distinguish all his other productions:—with the same still more characteristic disdain of puny graces and small originalities—the true poetical hardihood, in the strength of which he urges on his Pegasus fearlessly 'through dense and rare,' and, aiming gallantly at the great ends of truth and effect, stoops but rarely to study the means by which they are to be attained—avails himself, without scruple, of common sentiments and common images wherever they seem fitted for his purposes—and is

original by the very boldness of his borrowing, and impressive by his disregard of epigram and emphasis."

Jeffrey points out that the real hero of the poem is not the Lord of the Isles, but Bruce: "it is no unusual misfortune for the author of a modern epic to have his hero turn out but a secondary personage." Scott however meant from the beginning to make Bruce his hero, but he thought it a mistake to name a book after a well-known hero, because the author "has not the privilege of wakening the enthusiasm of his audience; on the contrary it is already awakened, and glows, it may be, more ardently than that of the author himself."

Modern readers are not likely to agree with Jeffrey when he says that in recording Bruce's adventures Scott "has lowered down the tone of his poetry to the tame level of the rude chroniclers by whom the incidents were originally recorded,"—for we now have a higher opinion of the poetical merits of those "rude chroniclers." In criticising the chivalrous sentiments which Scott attributes to the combatants Jeffrey shews a surprising ferocity of patriotism: "There is a more serious and general fault, however, in the conduct of all this part of the story—and that is, that it is not sufficiently national—and breathes nothing either of that animosity towards England, or that exultation over her defeat which must have animated all Scotland at the period to which he refers, and ought consequently to have been the ruling passion of his poem. Mr Scott, however, not only dwells fondly on the valour and generosity of the invaders, but actually makes an elaborate apology to the English for having ventured to select for his theme a story which records their disasters....Mr Scott certainly need not have been afraid either of exciting rebellion among his countrymen, or of bringing his own liberality and loyalty into question, although in speaking of the events of that remote period, where an overbearing conqueror was overthrown in a lawless attempt to subdue an independent kingdom, he had given full expression to the hatred and exultation which must have prevailed among the victors, and are indeed the only passions which can be supposed to be excited by the story of their exploits."

Admirers of Scott will join with Jeffrey in regretting that "there are fewer detached ballads or lyrical pieces in this than in any of Mr Scott's greater poems, and we miss the animation which they used to impart to a long and unbroken narrative." He commends the tenderness and solemnity of the opening stanzas and "the wild, rapid, and spirited strain" of the *Broach of Lorn* (II. xi-xiii). "The most striking novelty in the present poem is the extent and variety of the sea pieces which it contains," and those in Canto I. xviii, xxi-xxiii, IV. vii, ix, x, xi, xiii, are quoted with approval. "One of the sweetest and at the same time the most animated passages of the whole is the death and avenging of the poor slumberous page" (III. xxviii-xxix). Justice is also done to the striking descriptions of the desolate grandeur and magnificence of the landscape in Skye (Canto III.) and to the embarkation, the mysterious beacon, the moonlight muster on the beach, the description of Turnberry Chase (v. vii, xiii-xiv, xix), and of the night and morning before the battle of Bannockburn (VI. xix-xxi). To the passages which Jeffrey thus counts among the beauties of the poem the Abbot's prophecy of Bruce's victories (II. xxx-xxxii), the death of Boune (VI. xv), and the description of Bannockburn should be added; the last named, if not equal to the description of Flodden in *Marmion*, yet ranks high among battle-pieces, and is probably the best known passage in the poem.

To turn to the less favourable side of Jeffrey's review: he holds that the blending of the historical and fictitious parts of the story, i.e. of the Bruce's adventures and the story of Ronald and Edith, produces a feeling of incongruity and disappointment: "for as the poem begins with the imaginary persons, and takes its title from them, we continue to look for the resumption of that wilder legend, long after the Bruce has filled the scene with his own real presence; and, of course, lend but a careless ear to the first exploits of him whom we do not immediately recognise as its proper hero." Moreover he thinks the fictitious part of the story uninteresting, and the reader will probably find it difficult to gainsay his judgment when he remarks that the concerns of Isabel and Edith "form the heaviest part of the

poem. The mawkish generosity of the one, and the piteous fidelity of the other, are equally oppressive to the reader; and do not tend at all to put him in good humour with Lord Ronald,—who, though the beloved of both, and the nominal hero of the work, is certainly as far as possible from an interesting person. The lovers of poetry have a particular aversion to the inconstancy of other lovers; we suspect, therefore, that they will have but little indulgence for the fickleness of the Lord of the Isles; who breaks the troth he had pledged to the heiress of Lorn as soon as he sees a chance of succeeding with the king's sister; and comes back to the slighted bride, when his royal mistress takes the vows in a convent, and the heiress gets into possession of her lands, by the forfeiture of her brother. These characters, and this story, form the great blemish of the poem."

It is no doubt largely due to these defects in the love-story that the *Lord of the Isles*, in spite of its spirited narrative of adventure and arms and its beautiful descriptions of nature, has always been less admired than the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, *Marmion*, or the *Lady of the Lake*.

HISTORICAL SOURCES.

The chief authorities used by Scott for the history of Bruce's life and times were, as he tells us¹, Lord Hailes' *Annals of Scotland* and Barbour's *Bruce*. In some incidents however, as will be mentioned in the notes, he followed local traditions.

The former work, published in 1776-9, is much esteemed for its accuracy. The author, Sir David Dalrymple, on becoming a judge of the Court of Session, assumed, in accordance with the

¹ See the *Advertisement* prefixed to the poem. The projected edition of the *Bruce* by Dr Jamieson, which Scott there mentions, was published in due course, and the passages quoted in the notes follow his text, except where important improvements are offered by the text of Professor Skeat, edited for the Early English Text Society.

Scotch custom, the title of Lord Hailes; the work is therefore sometimes described as Dalrymple's and sometimes as Hailes' *Annals of Scotland*.

As a poem the *Lord of the Isles* owes much more to the *Bruce* of John Barbour, who was probably born very shortly after the battle of Bannockburn, and held the office of Archdeacon of Aberdeen from 1357 or earlier down to his death in 1395; he was engaged in writing his poem in 1375. He visited Oxford and Paris several times between 1364-8 in order to study theology.

The *Bruce* consists of some 7000 eight-syllable lines, rhyming in couplets. On some points Barbour undoubtedly is not to be trusted, for instance in the almost invariable successes which he describes Bruce as gaining over the English, however overwhelming their numbers: the battle of Methven is almost the only instance in which Bruce gets the worst of it in a well-contested battle. His merit lies in his vivid descriptions and picturesque and spirited anecdotes; he delights "in the pomp and circumstance of war." His great theme is the freedom of Scotland from the foreign yoke, and he represents Bruce as devoted to this great end throughout his career. In order to present the wrongs of Bruce in a striking light "he rolls three real personages into one ideal hero¹," representing the Robert Bruce who was a claimant for the Scotch crown in 1290 and his son Robert Bruce as being the same person as our hero King Robert I, who was really grandson of the first and son of the second. "His hero is not to be degraded by announcing that he had once sworn fealty to Edward, and once done homage to Balliol, or ever joined any party but that of his country and freedom²."

In the poem Scott follows in the main Barbour's exalted view of Bruce's character, but he takes a more sober estimate in some of his annotations³. A balanced judgment is presented

¹ Sir H. Maxwell, *Robert the Bruce*, p. 6.

² Cosmo Innes, Preface to his edition of the *Bruce*.

³ See note on III. 163.

by Hume Brown¹: "The antecedents of the future deliverer himself were [in 1306] not such as to inspire a nation with confidence or enthusiasm. He had changed sides so often that it is difficult to follow his devious career. For two reasons, however, this does not necessarily imply that he was of a shifty character or specially doubtful honour. Holding large dominions both in Scotland and England, he belonged as much to the one country as the other, and if he had changed sides often, Edward also had changed his policy towards himself. As for the breaking of pledges, it was common to the highest personages of every country in Christendom.....[At his death in 1329] so thoroughly had he done his work that not even the weakness of his immediate successors could undo it. In view of the work he accomplished, it may be confidently said that he was the greatest king that ever sat on the Scottish throne. David I is the only other who may dispute the preeminence; but while David built up and improved Scotland, of Bruce it can be affirmed that he saved it. At the beginning of his great enterprise the probability is that he was prompted solely by the desire of making good the claims of his own house. But as his work grew and prospered, he rose to the conception of a true patriot-king. From the great Edward himself he doubtless learned to conceive the kingly function in a large and disinterested sense; and, aided by good fortune, his higher prudence and more winning personal qualities assured to him a far happier destiny in the enthusiastic regard of his country. Of his personal traits we can speak with some confidence, for tradition is in certain points supported by authentic facts. As a mere knight, he ranked with the first in Christendom—in this point also resembling his enemy king Edward. In spite of the passionate deed² with which he began his career, the qualities he subsequently showed were precisely those of prudence and self-control. From Barbour we learn that these qualities were lightened by unfailing spirits and good humour."

¹ *History of Scotland*, I. pp. 152, 167-8.

² The murder of Comyn.

It is unnecessary to enter more fully into the history of the period, as the main facts are to be found in all text-books of English history, and details are treated by Scott in his notes. The following Chronological Table however may prove useful.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

- 1290 Death of Margaret, the young Queen of Scotland.
Edward I claims the right as over-lord to decide the succession to the crown.
Robert Bruce, grandfather of the future king, is one of the claimants.
- 1292 Edward I awards the crown to John Baliol.
- 1295 Baliol makes alliance with France and throws off allegiance to Edward I.
- 1296 Victory of Edward at Dunbar. Robert Bruce (the future king) among those who swear fealty to him.
- 1297 Revolt of William Wallace; defeat of the English at Stirling.
Bruce joins the insurgents, but afterwards makes his peace with Edward I.
- 1298 Edward I crushes Wallace at Falkirk.
- 1304 Bruce goes to London after his father's death and does homage for his English estates.
- 1305 Execution of Wallace.
- 1306 Bruce murders John Comyn and is crowned king at Scone (*March*).
Battle of Methven : Pembroke defeats Bruce (*June*).
Battle of Dalry : Lorn defeats Bruce.
Capture of Bruce's Queen and many of his followers at Kildrummie Castle (*July*). Nigel Bruce, Fraser, Seton executed. Bruce and his followers retire to Rachrin for the winter (*Sept.*).
- 1307 (*Spring*) Douglas crosses to Arran, and captures Brodick Castle.

Bruce follows him and they reconnoitre Turnberry Castle and kill the English soldiers outside the walls, but cannot capture the castle.

(*May*) Battle of Loudon Hill: Bruce defeats Pembroke—his first success in the open field.

(*June 7*) Edward I dies.

(*Autumn*) Douglas' successes at Castle Dangerous.

(*Dec. 24 or in May 1308*) Battle of Old Meldrum: Bruce defeats Buchan.

1308 Douglas captures Randolph, who goes over to Bruce's side.

Edward Bruce defeats St John in Galloway.

Bruce defeats John of Lorn near Loch Awe (*August*).

In this and the following years the conduct of the war in Edward II's hands is feeble. In 1311 Bruce and in 1312 Edward Bruce make raids on Northumberland.

1313 Most of the Scotch castles held for Edward II surrender to Bruce.

Edward Bruce besieges Philip de Mowbray in Stirling Castle, but agrees to suspend hostilities on condition that if the castle is not relieved by June 24, 1314, it shall be surrendered (*Midsummer*).

1314 (*June 24*) Victory of Bruce at Bannockburn.

METRE.

Modern English metres may be classified according to (*a*) the number and position of the *accented*¹ *syllables* in each line, and—if the lines are rhymed—(*b*) the arrangement of the *rhymes*. All the metres employed in the *Lord of the Isles* are rhymed.

The recurrence of accented syllables divides the line into

¹ An accented syllable is a syllable uttered with more stress or force than the syllable immediately preceding or following it.

feet. These divisions are indicated in the specimens quoted below by bars.

I. *The Spenserian stanza*, in which the Introductions to the six Cantos and the Conclusion of the poem are written, is so called because it is the metre of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*.

Accent. Each stanza is composed of eight lines of five iambic¹ feet, followed by an Alexandrine, that is, an iambic line of six feet:—

And yét | some tñts | of súm|mer splénd|our téll |
 Whén the | broad sún | sinks dówn | on Étt|rick's wést|ern fell |
 (Alexandrine).

(a) Sometimes (as in the Alexandrine above) a trochee² is found in place of an iambus in the first foot.

(b) Sometimes, in this and the other metres described, an accented syllable is preceded by two unaccented syllables, which are pronounced closely together or *slurred*:—

Yet líng|ering nótes | of sílv|an mús|ic swéll |

Rhyme. The following lines rhyme:—1st and 3rd; 2nd, 4th, 5th, 7th; 6th, 8th, 9th. This system is often represented thus: *ababbcbcc*.

II. The metre of *The Minstrel's Song* (I. iv).

Accent. Each stanza consists of eight iambic lines of four feet each; the *Rhymes* are arranged thus:—*ababcdcd*.

III. The metre of *The Broach of Lorn* (II. xi–xiii).

Accent. Each stanza consists of eight lines of *either* three trochaic feet with a final accented syllable *or* four trochaic feet:—

Whénce the | broách of | búrning | góld
 Ón the | váried | tártans | beáming |

Sometimes there is an unaccented syllable at the beginning

¹ An iambic foot or iambus consists of an unaccented syllable followed by an accented syllable, as *departs*.

² A trochee consists of an accented syllable followed by an unaccented syllable, as *autumn*.

of the line, if the preceding line has ended with an accented syllable :—

That | cláps the | chieftain's | mántle-|fóld.

Rhyme. The lines rhyme in couplets.

IV. *The Christabel Metre*¹, in which the remainder of the poem is written, is not subject to such strict rules as the metres described above, and is therefore called an irregular metre.

There are four accented syllables in each line, but the number and position of the unaccented syllables admit of great variety :—

Wake Máid | of Lórn | the Mínst|rels súng |

—four iambic feet; this is the commonest form,—but Stanza i of the First Canto gives also :—

Ánd the dark | seás thy | tówers that | láve
Heáved on the | beách a | sófter | wáve
As íf | wild woóds | and wáves | had pleás|ure
Wóρθless | of guérð|on ánd | regárd |

The lines rhyme in couplets as far as Stanza xiv, where a less regular arrangement of rhyme in the four-accent lines begins, and three-accent lines, rhyming together, are interspersed :—

She gáin'd | of fór|ward wáy | (311)

Who toí | the líve|long dáy | (314)

A more stirring movement is thus given to the description of the ships' buffeting with the waves, and in particular a graceful liveliness to the picture of Lord Ronald's fleet (Stanza xv); but the poet's reflections thereon recall him to the earlier measure in 364-71.

Again in Stanza xxi there is a regular system in the rhyme and in the combination of four-accent and three-accent lines for the finished description of the "lightnings of the wave."

¹ So called because it was perfected by Coleridge in his poem *Christabel*. Passages from that poem were read aloud to Scott some years before it was published, and he adopted the metre in the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* and his other longer poems, though he never employed it with Coleridge's marvellous skill.

For the serious arguments and speeches of Canto II. the poet reverts to the lines of four feet rhyming in couplets.

A passage in which the metre is varied with admirable effect is Canto IV. Stanzas vii-xiii. (See notes.) Observe especially in Stanza x the contrast between the lively, sparkling movement produced in the earlier lines by the free use of unaccented syllables—

Mérrily | mérrily | goés the | bárk
 On a breéze | from the nóth|ward fréé |
 So shoóts | through the mórn|ing ský | the lárk |
 Or the swán | through the súm|mer seá |

and the staid and solemn effect of the more regular metre employed in the description of Staffa.

Scott had been criticised for the lines, sometimes harsh and sometimes weak, which are often found in *Marmion* and other of his poems. He evidently paid more attention to the versification of the *Lord of the Isles*, which is much more finished.

OUTLINE OF THE STORY.

Robert Bruce, crowned King of Scotland in 1306, is driven by his enemies to seek refuge for the winter in the island of Rachrin. Allaster, Lord of Lorn, his bitter foe, has betrothed his daughter Edith to Ronald, Lord of the Isles, also an opponent of Bruce. Ronald is secretly in love with Isabel, Bruce's sister, and has therefore delayed the wedding.

Canto I. On the wedding morning Ronald with his fleet crossing the Sound of Mull to his castle of Artornish, where Edith awaits him, passes a skiff, on board of which are the Bruces, who at nightfall are obliged to seek shelter at Artornish.

Canto II. Admitted to the wedding feast, the Bruces are detected by Lorn, who, by bidding his minstrel sing a song offensive to them, makes the impetuous Edward Bruce, the king's brother, declare himself. Argentine demands their surrender

in the name of Edward I, but Ronald protects them as his guests; Lorn then refuses him Edith's hand, and denounces King Robert as guilty of sacrilege to the Abbot of Iona, who has arrived to solemnize the marriage. The Abbot, intending to excommunicate the king, is constrained by a sudden inspiration to bless him and foretell his future triumph.

Canto III. Ronald swears allegiance to King Robert; they seek refuge in the isle of Skye. Edith, disguised as a page, has escaped from her father in the Abbot's ship, from which she is taken by Cormac Doil, a pirate whom her father sends in pursuit. Cormac is shipwrecked and cast on the isle of Skye with four followers and Edith, who feigns dumbness. The king with his page and Ronald have landed to shoot deer; the five pirates shelter them, but try to murder them while asleep. They succeed in killing the king's page, but are themselves slain by the king and Ronald.

Canto IV. Edward Bruce brings news that his brother's friends are rallying and Edward I is dead. With Edith, who takes the murdered page's place, they sail southwards, calling the islands to arms on their way, drag their ships over the isthmus of Tarbat, and meet their friends in Arran. Isabel has retired to St Bride's nunnery; the king visits her to plead Ronald's suit for her hand. She refuses to entertain it unless Edith renounces her claims on him by giving up her betrothal ring.

Canto V. Edith, who, as the king's page, has been present at the interview, secretly conveys her ring to Isabel, who, penetrating her disguise, sends to the king's camp for her. She however has been sent on an errand to the mainland, to which Bruce and his band, guided by a mysterious beacon, now cross by night, in order to surprise Turnberry Castle, the king's birthplace, which is held by an English garrison. Edith, exhausted, has to be concealed in a hollow oak, where she is discovered next morning by hunters from the castle; as she refuses to speak, she is condemned to be hung. Ronald rescues her, and Edward Bruce captures the castle.

Canto VI. An interval of seven years follows. Isabel becomes a nun; Edith lives at St Bride's under her protection; until the king, wishing to marry her to Ronald, sends for her to come to court. She finds the king at Bannockburn, prepared to withstand the great army which Edward II has assembled to relieve Stirling Castle. Placed for safety among the camp-followers, and fearing at a critical moment of the battle that Ronald's force is in peril, she calls the camp-followers to the rescue. Fired by the marvel of hearing the dumb speak, they rush to the fray, and complete the rout of the English, who mistake their coming for the approach of a fresh host. The next day Ronald and Edith are married.

Scott follows ancient authorities in his general account of the struggle between Scotland and the English crown and of the enmity of the House of Lorn against Bruce. Some incidents (such as the mysterious beacon in v. xii-xv) are taken from the traditions of the peasantry. On the other hand, all that part of the story which relates to Edith and Isabel and Ronald's love affairs is not historical: Angus Og, the real Lord of the Isles at the time, supported Bruce from the time of his coronation.

THE
LORD OF THE ISLES
A POEM
IN SIX CANTOS

ADVERTISEMENT.

The Scene of this Poem lies, at first, in the Castle of Artornish, on the coast of Argyleshire ; and, afterwards, in the Islands of Skye and Arran, and upon the coast of Ayrshire. Finally, it is laid near Stirling. The story opens in the spring of the year 1307, when Bruce, who had been driven out of Scotland by the English and the Barons who adhered to that foreign interest, returned from the Island of Rathlin on the coast of Ireland, again to assert his claims to the Scottish crown. Many of the personages and incidents introduced are of historical celebrity. The authorities used are chiefly those of the venerable Lorà Hailes, as well entitled to be called the restorer of Scottish history, as Bruce the restorer of Scottish monarchy ; and of Archdeacon Barbour, a correct edition of whose Metrical History of Robert Bruce will soon, I trust, appear, under the care of my learned friend, the Rev. Dr Jamieson.

Abbotsford, 10th December, 1814.

THE
LORD OF THE ISLES.

CANTO FIRST.

AUTUMN departs—but still his mantle's fold
Rests on the groves of noble Somerville,
Beneath a shroud of russet dropp'd with gold
Tweed and his tributaries mingle still ;
Hoarser the wind, and deeper sounds the rill, 5
Yet lingering notes of silvan music swell,
The deep-toned cushat, and the redbreast shrill ;
And yet some tints of summer splendour tell
When the broad sun sinks down on Ettrick's western fell.

Autumn departs—from Gala's fields no more 10
Come rural sounds our kindred banks to cheer ;
Blent with the stream, and gale that wafts it o'er,
No more the distant reaper's mirth we hear.
The last blithe shout hath died upon our ear,
And harvest-home hath hush'd the clanging wain, 15
On the waste hill no forms of life appear,
Save where, sad laggard of the autumnal train,
Some age-struck wanderer gleans few ears of scatter'd grain.

Deem'st thou these sadden'd scenes have pleasure still,
Lovest thou through Autumn's fading realms to stray, 20
To see the heath-flower wither'd on the hill,
To listen to the wood's expiring lay,
To note the red leaf shivering on the spray,
To mark the last bright tints the mountain stain,
On the waste fields to trace the gleaner's way, 25
And moralize on mortal joy and pain?—

O! if such scenes thou lovest, scorn not the minstrel strain.

No! do not scorn, although its hoarser note
Scarce with the cushat's homely song can vie,
Though faint its beauties as the tints remote 30
That gleam through mist in autumn's evening sky,
And few as leaves that tremble, sear and dry,
When wild November hath his bugle wound;
Nor mock my toil—a lonely gleaner I,
Through fields time-wasted, on sad inquest bound, 35
Where happier bards of yore have richer harvest found.

So shalt thou list, and haply not unmoved,
To the wild tale of Albyn's warrior day;
In distant lands, by the rough West reproved,
Still live some relics of the ancient lay. 40
For, when on Coolin's hills the lights decay,
With such the Seer of Skye the eve beguiles;
'Tis known amid the pathless wastes of Reay,
In Harries known, and in Iona's piles,
Where rest from mortal coil the Mighty of the Isles. 45

I.

"WAKE, Maid of Lorn!" the Minstrels sung.
 Thy rugged halls, Artornish! rung,
 And the dark seas, thy towers that lave,
 Heaved on the beach a softer wave,
 As mid the tuneful choir to keep 50
 The diapason of the Deep.
 Lull'd were the winds on Inninmore
 And green Loch-Alline's woodland shore,
 As if wild woods and waves had pleasure
 In listing to the lovely measure. 55
 And ne'er to symphony more sweet
 Gave mountain echoes answer meet,
 Since, met from mainland and from isle,
 Ross, Arran, Ilay, and Argyle,
 Each minstrel's tributary lay 60
 Paid homage to the festal day.
 Dull and dishonour'd were the bard,
 Worthless of guerdon and regard,
 Deaf to the hope of minstrel fame,
 Or lady's smiles, his noblest aim, 65
 Who on that morn's resistless call
 Were silent in Artornish hall.

II.

"Wake, Maid of Lorn!" 'twas thus they sung,
 And yet more proud the descant rung,
 "Wake, Maid of Lorn! high right is ours, 70
 To charm dull sleep from Beauty's bowers;

Earth, Ocean, Air, have nought so shy
 But owns the power of minstrelsy.
 In Lettermore the timid deer
 Will pause, the harp's wild chime to hear; 75
 Rude Heiskar's seal through surges dark
 Will long pursue the minstrel's bark;
 To list his notes, the eagle proud
 Will poise him on Ben-Cailliach's cloud;
 Then let not Maiden's ear disdain 80
 The summons of the minstrel train,
 But, while our harps wild music make,
 Edith of Lorn, awake, awake!

III.

"O wake, while Dawn, with dewy shine,
 Wakes Nature's charms to vie with thine! 85
 She bids the mottled thrush rejoice
 To mate thy melody of voice;
 The dew that on the violet lies
 Mocks the dark lustre of thine eyes;
 But, Edith, wake, and all we see 90
 Of sweet and fair shall yield to thee!"
 "She comes not yet," grey Ferrand cried;
 "Brethren, let softer spell be tried,
 Those notes prolong'd, that soothing theme,
 Which best may mix with Beauty's dream, 95
 And whisper, with their silvery tone,
 The hope she loves, yet fears to own."
 He spoke, and on the harp-strings died
 The strains of flattery and of pride;
 More soft, more low, more tender fell 100
 The lay of love he bade them tell.

IV.

“Wake, Maid of Lorn! the moments fly,
Which yet that maiden-name allow;
Wake, Maiden, wake! the hour is nigh,
When Love shall claim a plighted vow. 105
By Fear, thy bosom’s fluttering guest,
By Hope, that soon shall fears remove,
We bid thee break the bonds of rest,
And wake thee at the call of Love!

“Wake, Edith, wake! in yonder bay 110
Lies many a galley gaily mann’d,
We hear the merry pibrochs play,
We see the streamers’ silken band.
What Chieftain’s praise these pibrochs swell,
What crest is on these banners wove, 115
The harp, the minstrel, dare not tell—
The riddle must be read by Love.”

V.

Retired her maiden train among,
Edith of Lorn received the song,
But tamed the minstrel’s pride had been 120
That had her cold demeanour seen;
For not upon her cheek awoke
The glow of pride when Flattery spoke,
Nor could their tenderest numbers bring
One sigh responsive to the string. 125
As vainly had her maidens vied
In skill to deck the princely bride.
Her locks, in dark-brown lengths array’d,
Cathleen of Ulne, ’twas thine to braid;

Young Eva with meet reverence drew 130
 On the light foot the silken shoe,
 While on the ankle's slender round
 Those strings of pearl fair Bertha wound,
 That, bleach'd Lochryan's depths within,
 Seem'd dusky still on Edith's skin. 135
 But Einion, of experience old,
 Had weightiest task—the mantle's fold
 In many an artful plait she tied,
 To show the form it seem'd to hide,
 Till on the floor descending roll'd 140
 Its waves of crimson blent with gold.

VI.

O! lives there now so cold a maid,
 Who thus in beauty's pomp array'd,
 In beauty's proudest pitch of power,
 And conquest won—the bridal hour— 145
 With every charm that wins the heart,
 By Nature given, enhanced by Art,
 Could yet the fair reflection view,
 In the bright mirror pictured true,
 And not one dimple on her cheek 150
 A tell-tale consciousness bespeak?—
 Lives still such maid?—Fair damsels, say,
 For further vouches not my lay,
 Save that such lived in Britain's isle,
 When Lorn's bright Edith scorn'd to smile. 155

VII.

But Morag, to whose fostering care
 Proud Lorn had given his daughter fair,

Morag, who saw a mother's aid
 By all a daughter's love repaid,
 (Strict was that bond—most kind of all— ' 160
 Inviolatè in Highland hall—)
 Grey Morag sate a space apart,
 In Edith's eyes to read her heart.
 In vain the attendants' fond appeal
 To Morag's skill, to Morag's zeal; 165
 She mark'd her child receive their care,
 Cold as the image sculptured fair,
 (Form of some sainted patroness,)
 Which cloister'd maids combine to dress;
 She mark'd—and knew her nursling's heart 170
 In the vain pomp took little part.
 Wistful a while she gazed—then press'd
 The maiden to her anxious breast
 In finish'd loveliness—and led
 To where a turret's airy head, 175
 Slender and steep, and battled round,
 O'erlook'd, dark Mull! thy mighty Sound,
 Where thwarting tides, with mingled roar,
 Part thy swarth hills from Morven's shore.

VIII.

"Daughter," she said, "these seas behold, 180
 Round twice a hundred islands roll'd,
 From Hirt, that hears their northern roar,
 To the green Ilay's fertile shore;
 Or mainland turn, where many a tower
 Owns thy bold brother's feudal power, 185
 Each on its own dark cape reclined,
 And listening to its own wild wind,

From where Mingarry, sternly placed,
O'erawes the woodland and the waste,
To where Dunstaffnage hears the raging 190
Of Connal with his rocks engaging.
Think'st thou, amid this ample round,
A single brow but thine has frown'd,
To sadden this auspicious morn,
That bids the daughter of high Lorn 195
Impledge her spousal faith to wed
The heir of mighty Somerled?
Ronald, from many a hero sprung,
The fair, the valiant, and the young,
LORD OF THE ISLES, whose lofty name 200
A thousand bards have given to fame,
The mate of monarchs, and allied
On equal terms with England's pride—
From chieftain's tower to bondsman's cot,
Who hears the tale, and triumphs not? 205
The damsel dons her best attire,
The shepherd lights his beltane fire,
Joy, joy! each warder's horn hath sung,
Joy, joy! each matin bell hath rung;
The holy priest says grateful mass, 210
Loud shouts each hardy galla-glass,
No mountain den holds outcast boor
Of heart so dull, of soul so poor,
But he hath flung his task aside,
And claim'd this morn for holy-tide; 215
Yet, empress of this joyful day,
Edith is sad while all are gay."—

IX.

Proud Edith's soul came to her eye,
Resentment check'd the struggling sigh,
Her hurrying hand indignant dried 220
The burning tears of injured pride—
"Morag, forbear! or lend thy praise
To swell yon hireling harpers' lays;
Make to yon maids thy boast of power,
That they may waste a wondering hour, 225
Telling of banners proudly borne,
Of pealing bell and bugle-horn,
Or, theme more dear, of robes of price,
Crownlets and gauds of rare device.
But thou, experienced as thou art, 230
Think'st thou with these to cheat the heart,
That, bound in strong affection's chain,
Looks for return and looks in vain?
No! sum thine Edith's wretched lot
In these brief words—He loves her not! 235

X.

"Debate it not—too long I strove
To call his cold observance love,
All blinded by the league that styled
Edith of Lorn,—while yet a child,
She tripp'd the heath by Morag's side,— 240
The brave Lord Ronald's destined bride.
Ere yet I saw him, while afar
His broadsword blazed in Scotland's war,
Train'd to believe our fates the same,
My bosom throb'd when Ronald's name 245

Came gracing Fame's heroic tale,
Like perfume on the summer gale.
What pilgrim sought our halls, nor told
Of Ronald's deeds in battle bold ;
Who touch'd the harp to heroes' praise, 250
But his achievements swell'd the lays?
Even Morag—not a tale of fame
Was hers but closed with Ronald's name.
He came! and all that had been told
Of his high worth seem'd poor and cold, 255
Tame, lifeless, void of energy,
Unjust to Ronald and to me!

XI.

"Since then, what thought had Edith's heart
And gave not plighted love its part!—
And what requital? cold delay— 260
Excuse that shunn'd the spousal day.—
It dawns, and Ronald is not here!—
Hunts he Bentalla's nimble deer,
Or loiters he in secret dell
To bid some lighter love farewell, 265
And swear, that though he may not scorn
A daughter of the House of Lorn,
Yet, when these formal rites are o'er,
Again they meet, to part no more?"

XII.

—"Hush, daughter, hush! thy doubts remove, 270
More nobly think of Ronald's love.

Look, where beneath the castle gray
 His fleet unmoor from Aros bay!
 See'st not each galley's topmast bend,
 As on the yards the sails ascend? 275
 Hiding the dark-blue land they rise,
 Like the white clouds on April skies;
 The shouting vassals man the oars,
 Behind them sink Mull's mountain shores,
 Onward their merry course they keep, 280
 Through whistling breeze and foaming deep.
 And mark the headmost, seaward cast,
 Stoop to the freshening gale her mast,
 As if she veil'd its banner'd pride,
 To greet afar her prince's bride! 285
 Thy Ronald comes, and while in speed
 His galley mates the flying steed,
 He chides her sloth!"—Fair Edith sigh'd,
 Blush'd, sadly smiled, and thus replied:—

XIII.

"Sweet thought, but vain!—No, Morag! mark, 290
 Type of his course, yon lonely bark,
 That oft hath shifted helm and sail,
 To win its way against the gale.
 Since peep of morn, my vacant eyes
 Have view'd by fits the course she tries; 295
 Now, though the darkening scud comes on,
 And dawn's fair promises be gone,
 And though the weary crew may see
 Our sheltering haven on their lee,
 Still closer to the rising wind 300
 They strive her shivering sail to bind,

Still nearer to the shelves' dread verge
At every tack her course they urge,
As if they fear'd Artornish more
Than adverse winds and breakers' roar."

305

XIV.

Sooth spoke the Maid.—Amid the tide
The skiff she mark'd lay tossing sore,
And shifted oft her stooping side,
In weary tack from shore to shore.
Yet on her destined course no more
She gain'd, of forward way,
Than what a minstrel may compare
To the poor meed which peasants share,
Who toil the livelong day;
And such the risk her pilot braves,
That oft, before she wore,
Her boltsprit kiss'd the broken waves,
Where in white foam the ocean raves
Upon the shelving shore.
Yet, to their destined purpose true,
Undaunted toil'd her hardy crew,
Nor look'd where shelter lay,
Nor for Artornish Castle drew,
Nor steer'd for Aros bay.

310

315

320

XV.

Thus while they strove with wind and seas,
Borne onward by the willing breeze
Lord Ronald's fleet swept by,

325

Streamer'd with silk, and trick'd with gold,
Mann'd with the noble and the bold

Of Island chivalry.

330

Around their prows the ocean roars,
And chafes beneath their thousand oars,

Yet bears them on their way:

So chafes the war-horse in his might,
That fieldward bears some valiant knight,
Champs, till both bit and boss are white,

335

But, foaming, must obey.

On each gay deck they might behold

Lances of steel and crests of gold,

And hauberks with their burnish'd fold,

340

That shimmer'd fair and free;

And each proud galley, as she pass'd,

To the wild cadence of the blast

Gave wilder minstrelsy.

Full many a shrill triumphant note

345

Saline and Scallastle bade float

Their misty shores around;

And Morven's echoes answer'd well,

And Duart heard the distant swell

Come down the darksome Sound.

350

XVI.

So bore they on with mirth and pride,

And if that labouring bark they spied,

'Twas with such idle eye

As nobles cast on lowly boor,

When, toiling in his task obscure,

355

They pass him careless by.

Let them sweep on with heedless eyes!
But, had they known what mighty prize
 In that frail vessel lay,
The famish'd wolf, that prowls the wold, 360
Had scatheless pass'd the unguarded fold,
Ere, drifting by these galleys bold,
 Unchallenged were her way!
And thou, Lord Ronald, sweep thou on,
With mirth, and pride, and minstrel tone! 365
But had'st thou known who sail'd so nigh,
Far other glance were in thine eye!
Far other flush were on thy brow,
That, shaded by the bonnet, now
Assumes but ill the blithesome cheer 370
Of bridegroom when the bride is near!

XVII.

Yes, sweep they on!—We will not leave,
For them that triumph, those who grieve.
 With that armada gay
Be laughter loud and jocund shout, 375
And bards to cheer the wassail rout,
 With tale, romance, and lay;
And of wild mirth each clamorous art,
Which, if it cannot cheer the heart,
May stupify and stun its smart, 380
 For one loud busy day.
Yes, sweep they on!—But with that skiff
 Abides the minstrel tale,
Where there was dread of surge and cliff,
Labour that strain'd each sinew stiff, 385
 And one sad Maiden's wail.

XVIII.

All day with fruitless strife they toil'd,
 With eve the ebbing currents boil'd
 More fierce from strait and lake ;
 And midway through the channel met 390
 Conflicting tides that foam and fret,
 And high their mingled billows jet,
 As spears, that, in the battle set,
 Spring upward as they break.
 Then, too, the lights of eve were past, 395
 And louder sung the western blast
 On rocks of Inninmore ;
 Rent was the sail, and strain'd the mast,
 And many a leak was gaping fast,
 And the pale steersman stood 'aghastr, 400
 And gave the conflict o'er.

XIX.

'Twas then that One, whose lofty look
 Nor labour dull'd nor terror shook,
 Thus to the Leader spoke :—
 “Brother, how hopest thou to abide 405
 The fury of this wilder'd tide,
 Or how avoid the rock's rude side,
 Until the day has broke?
 Didst thou not mark the vessel reel,
 With quivering planks, and groaning keel, 410
 At the last billow's shock?
 Yet how of better counsel tell,
 Though here thou see'st poor Isabel
 Half dead with want and fear ;

For look on sea, or look on land, 415
Or yon dark sky, on every hand
Despair and death are near.
For her alone I grieve—on me
Danger sits light by land and sea,
I follow where thou wilt; 420
Either to bide the tempest's lour,
Or wend to yon unfriendly tower,
Or rush amid their naval power,
With war-cry wake their wassail-hour,
And die with hand on hilt."— 425

XX.

That elder Leader's calm reply
In steady voice was given,
"In man's most dark extremity
Oft succour dawns from Heaven.
Edward, trim thou the shatter'd sail, 430
The helm be mine, and down the gale
Let our free course be driven;
So shall we 'scape the western bay,
The hostile fleet, the unequal fray,
So safely hold our vessel's way 435
Beneath the Castle wall;
For if a hope of safety rest,
'Tis on the sacred name of guest,
Who seeks for shelter, storm-distress'd,
Within a chieftain's hall. 440
If not—it best beseems our worth,
Our name, our right, our lofty birth,
By noble hands to fall."

XXI.

The helm, to his strong arm consign'd,
 Gave the reef'd sail to meet the wind, 445
 And on her alter'd way,
 Fierce bounding, forward sprung the ship,
 Like greyhound starting from the slip
 To seize his flying prey.
 Awaked before the rushing prow, 450
 The mimic fires of ocean glow,
 Those lightnings of the wave ;
 Wild sparkles crest the broken tides,
 And, flashing round, the vessel's sides
 With elvish lustre lave, 455
 While, far behind, their livid light
 To the dark billows of the night
 A gloomy splendour gave :
 It seems as if old Ocean shakes
 From his dark brow the lucid flakes 460
 In envious pageantry,
 To match the meteor light that streaks
 Grim Hecla's midnight sky.

XXII.

Nor lack'd they steadier light to keep
 Their course upon the darken'd deep ;— 465
 Artornish, on her frowning steep
 'Twixt cloud and ocean hung,
 Glanced with a thousand lights of glee,
 And landward far, and far to sea,
 Her festal radiance flung. 470

By that blithe beacon-light they steer'd,
Whose lustre mingled well
With the pale beam that now appear'd,
As the cold moon her head uprear'd
Above the eastern fell.

475

XXIII.

Thus guided, on their course they bore,
Until they near'd the mainland shore,
When frequent on the hollow blast
Wild shouts of merriment were cast,
And wind and wave and sea-birds' cry
With wassail sounds in concert vie,
Like funeral shrieks with revelry,

480

Or like the battle-shout
By peasants heard from cliffs on high,
When Triumph, Rage, and Agony,

485

Madden the fight and rout.
Now nearer yet, through mist and storm
Dimly arose the Castle's form,

And deepen'd shadow made,
Far lengthen'd on the main below,
Where, dancing in reflected glow,

490

A hundred torches play'd,
Spangling the wave with lights as vain
As pleasures in this vale of pain,

That dazzle as they fade.

495

XXIV.

Beneath the Castle's sheltering lee
They staid their course in quiet sea.

Hewn in the rock, a passage there
 Sought the dark fortress by a stair,
 So strait, so high, so steep, 500
 With peasant's staff one valiant hand
 Might well the dizzy pass have mann'd
 'Gainst hundreds arm'd with spear and brand,
 And plunged them in the deep.
 His bugle then the helmsman wound; 505
 Loud answer'd every echo round
 From turret, rock, and bay,
 The postern's hinges crash and groan,
 And soon the warder's cresset shone
 On those rude steps of slippery stone, 510
 To light the upward way.
 "Thrice welcome, holy Sire!" he said;
 "Full long the spousal train have staid,
 And, vex'd at thy delay,
 Fear'd lest, amidst these wildering seas, 515
 The darksome night and freshening breeze
 Had driven thy bark astray."—

XXV.

"Warder," the younger stranger said,
 "Thine erring guess some mirth had made
 In mirthful hour; but nights like these, 520
 When the rough winds wake western seas,
 Brook not of glee. We crave some aid
 And needful shelter for this maid
 Until the break of day;
 For, to ourselves, the deck's rude plank 525
 Is easy as the mossy bank
 That's breathed upon by May.

And for our storm-toss'd skiff we seek
Short shelter in this leeward creek,
Prompt when the dawn the east shall streak 530
 Again to bear away."—
Answered the Warder, "In what name
Assert ye hospitable claim?
 Whence come, or whither bound?
Hath Erin seen your parting sails? 535
Or come ye on Norwegian gales?
And seek ye England's fertile vales,
 Or Scotland's mountain ground?"—

XXVI.

"Warriors—for other title none
For some brief space we list to own, 540
Bound by a vow—warriors are we;
In strife by land, and storm by sea,
 We have been known to fame;
And these brief words have import dear,
When sounded in a noble ear, 545
To harbour safe and friendly cheer
 That gives us rightful claim.
Grant us the trivial boon we seek,
And we in other realms will speak
 Fair of your courtesy; 550
Deny—and be your niggard Hold
Scorn'd by the noble and the bold,
Shunn'd by the pilgrim on the wold
 And wanderer on the lea!"—

XXVII.

“Bold stranger, no—’gainst claim like thine 555
No bolt revolves by hand of mine,
Though urged in tone that more express’d
A monarch than a suppliant guest.
Be what ye will, Artornish Hall
On this glad eve is free to all. 560
Though ye had drawn a hostile sword
’Gainst our ally, great England’s Lord,
Or mail upon your shoulders borne,
To battle with the Lord of Lorn,
Or, outlaw’d, dwelt by greenwood tree 565
With the fierce Knight of Ellerslie,
Or aided even the murderous strife,
When Comyn fell beneath the knife
Of that fell homicide The Bruce,
This night had been a term of truce.— 570
Ho, vassals! give these guests your care,
And show the narrow postern stair.”

XXVIII.

To land these two bold brethren leapt,
(The weary crew their vessel kept,) 575
And, lighted by the torches’ flare,
That seaward flung their smoky glare,
The younger knight that maiden bare
Half lifeless up the rock;
On his strong shoulder lean’d her head,
And down her long dark tresses shed, 580
As the wild vine in tendrils spread,
Droops from the mountain oak.

Him follow'd close that elder Lord,
And in his hand a sheathed sword,
Such as few arms could wield ; 585
But when he boun'd him to such task,
Well could it cleave the strongest casque,
And rend the surest shield.

XXIX.

The raised portcullis' arch they pass,
The wicket with its bars of brass, 590
The entrance long and low,
Flank'd at each turn by loop-holes strait,
Where bowmen might in ambush wait,
(If force or fraud should burst the gate,)
To gall an entering foe. 595
But every jealous post of ward
Was now defenceless and unbarr'd,
And all the passage free
To one low-brow'd and vaulted room,
Where squire and yeoman, page and groom, 600
Plied their loud revelry.

XXX.

And "Rest ye here," the Warder bade,
"Till to our Lord your suit is said.—
And, comrades, gaze not on the maid
And on these men who ask our aid, 605
As if ye ne'er had seen
A damsel tired of midnight bark
Or wanderers of a moulding stark
And bearing martial mien."

But not for Eachin's reproof 610
 Would page or vassal stand aloof,
 But crowded on to stare,
 As men of courtesy untaught,
 Till fiery Edward roughly caught
 From one the foremost there 615
 His chequer'd plaid, and in its shroud,
 To hide her from the vulgar crowd,
 Involved his sister fair.
 His brother, as the clansman bent
 His sullen brow in discontent, 620
 Made brief and stern excuse;—
 "Vassal, were thine the cloak of pall
 That decks thy Lord in bridal hall,
 'Twere honour'd by her use."

XXXI.

Proud was his tone, but calm; his eye 625
 Had that compelling dignity,
 His mien that bearing haught and high,
 Which common spirits fear;
 Needed nor word nor signal more,
 Nod, wink, and laughter, all were o'er; 630
 Upon each other back they bore,
 And gazed like startled deer.
 But now appear'd the Seneschal,
 Commission'd by his lord to call
 The strangers to the Baron's hall, 635
 Where feasted fair and free
 That Island Prince in nuptial tide
 With Edith there his lovely bride,

And her bold brother by her side,
And many a chief, the flower and pride 640
Of Western land and sea.

Here pause we, gentles, for a space;
And, if our tale hath won your grace,
Grant us brief patience, and again
We will renew the minstrel strain. 645

CANTO SECOND.

FILL the bright goblet, spread the festive board !
Summon the gay, the noble, and the fair !
Through the loud hall in joyous concert pour'd,
Let mirth and music sound the dirge of Care !
But ask thou not if Happiness be there, 5
If the loud laugh disguise convulsive throe,
Or if the brow the heart's true livery wear ;
Lift not the festal mask !—enough to know,
No scene of mortal life but teems with mortal woe.

II.

With beakers' clang, with harpers' lay, 10
With all that olden time deem'd gay,
The Island Chieftain feasted high ;
But there was in his troubled eye
A gloomy fire, and on his brow
Now sudden flush'd, and faded now, 15
Emotions such as draw their birth
From deeper source than festal mirth.
By fits he paused, and harper's strain
And jester's tale went round in vain,
Or fell but on his idle ear 20
Like distant sounds which dreamers hear.
Then would he rouse him, and employ
Each art to aid the clamorous joy,
And call for pledge and lay,

And, for brief space, of all the crowd, 25
As he was loudest of the loud,
Seem gayest of the gay.

III.

Yet nought amiss the bridal throng
Mark'd in brief mirth, or musing long;
The vacant brow, the unlistening ear, 30
They gave to thoughts of raptures near,
And his fierce starts of sudden glee
Seem'd bursts of bridegroom's ecstasy.
Nor thus alone misjudged the crowd,
Since lofty Lorn, suspicious, proud, 35
And jealous of his honour'd line,
And that keen knight, De Argentine,
(From England sent on errand high,
The western league more firm to tie,)
Both deem'd in Ronald's mood to find 40
A lover's transport-troubled mind.
But one sad heart, one tearful eye,
Pierced deeper through the mystery,
And watch'd, with agony and fear,
Her wayward bridegroom's varied cheer. 45

IV.

She watch'd—yet fear'd to meet his glance,
And he shunn'd hers;—till when by chance
They met, the point of foeman's lance
Had given a milder pang!

Beneath the intolerable smart 50
 He writhed;—then sternly mann'd his heart
 To play his hard but destined part,
 And from the table sprang.
 "Fill me the mighty cup!" he said,
 "Erst own'd by royal Somerled: 55
 Fill it, till on the studded brim
 In burning gold the bubbles swim,
 And every gem of varied shine
 Glow doubly bright in rosy wine!
 To you, brave lord, and brother mine, 60
 Of Lorn, this pledge I drink—
 The union of Our House with thine
 By this fair bridal-link!"—

V.

"Let it pass round!" quoth He of Lorn,
 "And in good time—that winded horn 65
 Must of the Abbot tell;
 The laggard monk is come at last."
 Lord Ronald heard the bugle-blast,
 And on the floor at random cast,
 The untasted goblet fell. 70
 But when the warder in his ear
 Tells other news, his blither cheer
 Returns like sun of May,
 When through a thunder-cloud it beams!—
 Lord of two hundred isles, he seems 75
 As glad of brief delay,
 As some poor criminal might feel,
 When from the gibbet or the wheel
 Respited for a day.

VI.

"Brother of Lorn," with hurried voice 80
 He said, "And you, fair lords, rejoice!
 Here, to augment our glee,
 Come wandering knights from travel far,
 Well proved, they say, in strife of war,
 And tempest on the sea.— 85
 Ho! give them at your board such place
 As best their presences may grace,
 And bid them welcome free!"
 With solemn step, and silver wand,
 The Seneschal the presence scann'd 90
 Of these strange guests; and well he knew
 How to assign their rank its due;
 For though the costly furs
 That erst had deck'd their caps were torn,
 And their gay robes were over-worn, 95
 And soil'd their gilded spurs,
 Yet such a high commanding grace
 Was in their mien and in their face,
 As suited best the princely dais,
 And royal canopy; 100
 And there he marshall'd them their place,
 First of that company.

VII.

Then lords and ladies spake aside,
 And angry looks the error chide,
 That gave to guests unnamed, unknown, 105
 A place so near their prince's throne;
 But Owen Erraught said,

"For forty years a seneschal,
 To marshal guests in bower and hall
 Has been my honour'd trade. 110
 Worship and birth to me are known,
 By look, by bearing, and by tone,
 Not by furr'd robe or broider'd zone;
 And 'gainst an oaken bough
 I'll gage my silver wand of state, 115
 That these three strangers oft have sate
 In higher place than now."—

VIII.

"I, too," the aged Ferrand said,
 "Am qualified by minstrel trade
 Of rank and place to tell;— 120
 Mark'd ye the younger stranger's eye,
 My mates, how quick, how keen, how high,
 How fierce its flashes fell,
 Glancing among the noble rout
 As if to seek the noblest out, 125
 Because the owner might not brook
 On any save his peers to look?
 And yet it moves me more,
 That steady, calm, majestic brow,
 With which the elder chief even now 130
 Scann'd the gay presence o'er,
 Like being of superior kind,
 In whose high-toned impartial mind
 Degrees of mortal rank and state
 Seem objects of indifferent weight. 135

The lady too—though closely tied
 The mantle veil both face and eye,
 Her motions' grace it could not hide,
 Nor could her form's fair symmetry."

IX.

Suspicious doubt and lordly scorn	140
Lour'd on the haughty front of Lorn.	
From underneath his brows of pride,	
The stranger guests he sternly eyed,	
And whisper'd closely what the ear	
Of Argentine alone might hear ;	145
Then question'd, high and brief,	
If, in their voyage, aught they knew	
Of the rebellious Scottish crew,	
Who to Rath-Erin's shelter drew,	
With Carrick's outlaw'd Chief?	150
And if, their winter's exile o'er,	
They harbour'd still by Ulster's shore,	
Or launch'd their galleys on the main,	
To vex their native land again?	

X.

That younger stranger, fierce and high,	155
At once confronts the Chieftain's eye	
With look of equal scorn ;—	
"Of rebels have we nought to show ;	
But if of Royal Bruce thou'dst know,	
I warn thee he has sworn,	160
Ere thrice three days shall come and go,	
His banner Scottish winds shall blow,	

Despite each mean or mighty foe,
 From England's every bill and bow,
 To Allaster of Lorn." 165
 Kindled the mountain Chieftain's ire,
 But Ronald quench'd the rising fire;
 "Brother, it better suits the time
 To chase the night with Ferrand's rhyme,
 Than wake, 'midst mirth and wine, the jars 170
 That flow from these unhappy wars."—
 "Content," said Lorn; and spoke apart
 With Ferrand, master of his art,
 Then whisper'd Argentine,—
 "The lay I named will carry smart 175
 To these bold strangers' haughty heart,
 If right this guess of mine."
 He ceased, and it was silence all,
 Until the Minstrel waked the hall.

XI.

The Broach of Lorn.

"Whence the broach of burning gold, 180
 That clasps the Chieftain's mantle-fold,
 Wrought and chased with rare device,
 Studded fair with gems of price,
 On the varied tartans beaming,
 As, through night's pale rainbow gleaming, 185
 Fainter now, now seen afar,
 Fitful shines the northern star?

 "Gem! ne'er wrought on highland mountain,
 Did the fairy of the fountain,

Or the mermaid of the wave, 190
 Frame thee in some coral cave?
 Did in Iceland's darksome mine
 Dwarf's swart hands thy metal twine?
 Or, mortal-moulded, comest thou here,
 From England's love, or France's fear? 195

XII.

Song continued.

"No!—thy splendours nothing tell
 Foreign art or faëry spell.
 Moulded thou for monarch's use,
 By the overweening Bruce,
 When the royal robe he tied 200
 O'er a heart of wrath and pride;
 Thence in triumph wert thou torn,
 By the victor hand of Lorn!

"When the gem was won and lost,
 Widely was the war-cry toss'd! 205
 Rung aloud Bendourish fell,
 Answer'd Douchart's sounding dell,
 Fled the deer from wild Teyndrum,
 When the homicide, o'ercome,
 Hardly 'scaped with scathe and scorn, 210
 Left the pledge with conquering Lorn!

XIII.

Song concluded.

"Vain was then the Douglas brand,
 Vain the Campbell's vaunted hand,
 Vain Kirkpatrick's bloody dirk,
 Making sure of murder's work; 215
 Barendown fled fast away,
 Fled the fiery De la Haye,
 When this broach, triumphant borne,
 Beam'd upon the breast of Lorn.

"Farthest fled its former Lord, 220
 Left his men to brand and cord,
 Bloody brand of Highland steel,
 English gibbet, axe, and wheel.
 Let him fly from coast to coast,
 Dogg'd by Comyn's vengeful ghost, 225
 While his spoils, in triumph worn,
 Long shall grace victorious Lorn!"

XIV.

As glares the tiger on his foes,
 Hemm'd in by hunters, spears, and bows,
 And, ere he bounds upon the ring, 230
 Selects the object of his spring,—
 Now on the bard, now on his Lord,
 So Edward glared and grasp'd his sword—
 But stern his brother spoke,—“Be still.
 What! art thou yet so wild of will, 235

After high deeds and sufferings long,
To chafe thee for a menial's song?—
Well hast thou framed, Old Man, thy strains,
To praise the hand that pays thy pains;
Yet something might thy song have told 240
Of Lorn's three vassals, true and bold,
Who rent their Lord from Bruce's hold,
As underneath his knee he lay,
And died to save him in the fray.
I've heard the Bruce's cloak and clasp 245
Was clench'd within their dying grasp,
What time a hundred foemen more
Rush'd in and back the victor bore,
Long after Lorn had left the strife,
Full glad to 'scape with limb and life.— 250
Enough of this—And, Minstrel, hold,
As minstrel-hire, this chain of gold
For future lays a fair excuse
To speak more nobly of the Bruce.”—

XV.

“Now, by Columba's shrine, I swear, 255
And every saint that's buried there,
'Tis he himself!” Lorn sternly cries,
“And for my kinsman's death he dies.”
As loudly Ronald calls—“Forbear!
Not in my sight, while brand I wear, 260
O'ermatch'd by odds, shall warrior fall,
Or blood of stranger stain my hall!
This ancient fortress of my race
Shall be misfortune's resting-place,

Shelter and shield of the distress'd, 265
 No slaughter-house for shipwreck'd guest."—
 "Talk not to me," fierce Lorn replied,
 "Of odds or match!—when Comyn died,
 Three daggers clash'd within his side!
 Talk not to me of sheltering hall, 270
 The Church of GOD saw Comyn fall!
 On God's own altar stream'd his blood,
 While o'er my prostrate kinsman stood
 The ruthless murderer—e'en as now—
 With armed hand and scornful brow!— 275
 Up, all who love me! blow on blow!
 And lay the outlaw'd felons low!"

XVI.

Then up sprung many a mainland Lord,
 Obedient to their Chieftain's word.
 Barcaldine's arm is high in air, 280
 And Kinloch-Alline's blade is bare,
 Black Murthok's dirk has left its sheath,
 And clench'd is Dermid's hand of death.
 Their mutter'd threats of vengeance swell
 Into a wild and warlike yell; 285
 Onward they press with weapons high,
 The affrighted females shriek and fly,
 And, Scotland, then thy brightest ray
 Had darken'd ere its noon of day,
 But every chief of birth and fame, 290
 That from the Isles of Ocean came,
 At Ronald's side that hour withstood
 Fierce Lorn's relentless thirst for blood.

XVII.

Brave Torquil from Dunvegan high,
 Lord of the misty hills of Skye, 295
 Mac-Niel, wild Bara's ancient thane,
 Duart, of bold Clan Gillian's strain,
 Fergus, of Canna's castled bay,
 Mac-Duffith, Lord of Colonsay,
 Soon as they saw the broadsword's glance, 300
 With ready weapons rose at once,
 More prompt, that many an ancient feud,
 Full oft suppress'd, full oft renew'd,
 Glow'd 'twixt the chieftains of Argyle,
 And many a lord of ocean's isle. 305
 Wild was the scene—each sword was bare,
 Back stream'd each chieftain's shaggy hair,
 In gloomy opposition set,
 Eyes, hands, and brandish'd weapons met;
 Blue gleaming o'er the social board, 310
 Flash'd to the torches many a sword;
 And soon those bridal lights may shine
 On purple blood for rosy wine.

XVIII.

While thus for blows and death prepared,
 Each heart was up, each weapon bared, 315
 Each foot advanced,—a surly pause
 Still revered hospitable laws.
 All menaced violence, but alike
 Reluctant each the first to strike,
 (For aye accursed in minstrel line 320
 Is he who brawls 'mid song and wine,)

And, match'd in numbers and in might,
Doubtful and desperate seem'd the fight.
Thus threat and murmur died away,
Till on the crowded hall there lay 325
Such silence, as the deadly still,
Ere bursts the thunder on the hill.
With blade advanced, each Chieftain bold
Show'd like the Sworder's form of old,
As wanting still the torch of life, 330
To wake the marble into strife.

XIX.

That awful pause the stranger maid
And Edith seized to pray for aid.
As to De Argentine she clung,
Away her veil the stranger flung, 335
And, lovely 'mid her wild despair,
Fast stream'd her eyes, wild flow'd her hair.
"O thou, of knighthood once the flower,
Sure refuge in distressful hour,
Thou, who in Judah well hast fought 340
For our dear faith, and oft hast sought
Renown in knightly exercise,
When this poor hand has dealt the prize,
Say, can thy soul of honour brook
On the unequal strife to look, 345
When, butcher'd thus in peaceful hall,
Those once thy friends, my brethren, fall!"
To Argentine she turn'd her word,
But her eye sought the Island Lord.
A flush like evening's setting flame 350
Glow'd on his cheek: his hardy frame,

As with a brief convulsion, shook:
 With hurried voice and eager look,—
 “Fear not,” he said, “my Isabel!
 What said I—Edith!—all is well— 355
 Nay, fear not—I will well provide
 The safety of my lovely bride—
 My bride?”—but there the accents clung
 In tremor to his faltering tongue.

XX.

Now rose De Argentine, to claim 360
 The prisoners in his sovereign’s name,
 To England’s crown who vassals sworn,
 ’Gainst their liege lord had weapon borne—
 (Such speech, I ween, was but to hide
 His care their safety to provide ; 365
 For knight more true in thought and deed
 Than Argentine ne’er spurr’d a steed)—
 And Ronald, who his meaning guess’d,
 Seem’d half to sanction the request.
 This purpose fiery Torquil broke ;— 370
 “Somewhat we’ve heard of England’s yoke,”
 He said, “and, in our islands, Fame
 Hath whisper’d of a lawful claim,
 That calls the Bruce fair Scotland’s Lord,
 Though dispossess’d by foreign sword. 375
 This craves reflection—but though right
 And just the charge of England’s Knight,
 Let England’s crown her rebels seize
 Where she has power ;—in towers like these,
 ’Midst Scottish Chieftains summon’d here 380
 To bridal mirth and bridal cheer,

Be sure, with no consent of mine
 Shall either Lorn or Argentine
 With chains or violence in our sight
 Oppress a brave and banish'd Knight." 385

XXI.

Then waked the wild debate again,
 With brawling threat and clamour vain.
 Vassals and menials, thronging in,
 Lent their brute rage to swell the din;
 When, far and wide, a bugle-clang 390
 From the dark ocean upward rang.

"The Abbot comes!" they cry at once,

"The holy man, whose favour'd glance

Hath sainted visions known;

Angels have met him on the way, 395

Beside the blessed martyrs' bay,

And by Columba's stone.

His monks have heard their hymnings high

Sound from the summit of Dun-Y,

To cheer his penance lone, 400

When at each cross, on girth and wold,

(Their number thrice a hundred-fold,)

His prayer he made, his beads he told,

With Aves many a one—

He comes our feuds to reconcile, 405

A sainted man from sainted isle;

We will his holy doom abide,

The Abbot shall our strife decide."

XXII.

Scarcely this fair accord was o'er,
 When through the wide revolving door 410
 The black-stoled brethren wind;
 Twelve sandall'd monks, who relics bore,
 With many a torch-bearer before,
 And many a cross behind.
 Then sunk each fierce uplifted hand, 415
 And dagger bright and flashing brand
 Dropp'd swiftly at the sight;
 They vanish'd from the Churchman's eye,
 As shooting stars, that glance and die,
 Dart from the vault of night. 420

XXIII.

The Abbot on the threshold stood,
 And in his hand the holy rood;
 Back on his shoulders flow'd his hood,
 The torch's glaring ray
 Show'd, in its red and flashing light, 425
 His wither'd cheek and amice white,
 His blue eye glistening cold and bright,
 His tresses scant and gray.
 "Fair Lords," he said, "Our Lady's love,
 And peace be with you from above, 430
 And Benedicite!—
 —But what means this? no peace is here!—
 Do dirks unsheathed suit bridal cheer?
 Or are these naked brands

A seemly show for Churchman's sight,
When he comes summon'd to unite
Betrothed hearts and hands?" 435

XXIV.

Then, cloaking hate with fiery zeal,
Proud Lorn first answer'd the appeal ;—
 "Thou comest, O holy Man, 440
True sons of blessed church to greet,
But little deeming here to meet
 A wretch, beneath the ban
Of Pope and Church, for murder done
Even on the sacred altar-stone !— 445
Well mayst thou wonder we should know
Such miscreant here, nor lay him low,
Or dream of greeting, peace, or truce,
With excommunicated Bruce !
Yet well I grant, to end debate, 450
Thy sainted voice decide his fate."

XXV.

Then Ronald pled the stranger's cause,
And knighthood's oath and honour's laws ;
And Isabel, on bended knee,
Brought pray'rs and tears to back the plea : 455
And Edith lent her generous aid,
And wept, and Lorn for mercy pray'd.
"Hence," he exclaim'd, "degenerate maid !
Was't not enough to Ronald's bower
I brought thee, like a paramour, 460

Or bond-maid at her master's gate,
His careless cold approach to wait?—
But the bold Lord of Cumberland,
The gallant Clifford, seeks thy hand;
His it shall be—Nay, no reply!
Hence! till those rebel eyes be dry.”
With grief the Abbot heard and saw,
Yet nought relax'd his brow of awe.

XXVI.

Then Argentine, in England's name,
So highly urged his sovereign's claim,
He waked a spark, that, long suppress'd,
Had smoulder'd in Lord Ronald's breast;
And now, as from the flint the fire,
Flash'd forth at once his generous ire.
“Enough of noble blood,” he said,
“By English Edward had been shed,
Since matchless Wallace first had been
In mock'ry crown'd with wreaths of green,
And done to death by felon hand,
For guarding well his father's land.
Where's Nigel Bruce? and De la Haye,
And valiant Seton—where are they?
Where Somerville, the kind and free?
And Fraser, flower of chivalry?
Have they not been on gibbet bound,
Their quarters flung to hawk and hound,
And hold we here a cold debate,
To yield more victims to their fate?
What! can the English Leopard's mood
Never be gorged with northern blood?

Was not the life of Athole shed,
 To soothe the tyrant's sicken'd bed?
 And must his word, till dying day,
 Be naught but quarter, hang, and slay!—
 Thou frown'st, De Argentine,—My gage
 Is prompt to prove the strife I wage.”— 495

XXVII.

“Nor deem,” said stout Dunvegan's knight,
 “That thou shalt brave alone the fight!
 By saints of isle and mainland both,
 By Woden wild, (my grandsire's oath,) 500
 Let Rome and England do their worst,
 Howe'er attainted or accursed,
 If Bruce shall e'er find friends again,
 Once more to brave a battle-plain,
 If Douglas couch again his lance, 505
 Or Randolph dare another chance,
 Old Torquil will not be to lack
 With twice a thousand at his back.—
 Nay, chafe not at my bearing bold,
 Good Abbot! for thou know'st of old, 510
 Torquil's rude thought and stubborn will
 Smack of the wild Norwegian still;
 Nor will I barter Freedom's cause
 For England's wealth, or Rome's applause.”

XXVIII.

The Abbot seem'd with eye severe 515
 The hardy Chieftain's speech to hear;

Then on King Robert turn'd the Monk,
But twice his courage came and sunk,
Confronted with the hero's look ;
Twice fell his eye, his accents shook ; 520
At length, resolved in tone and brow,
Sternly he question'd him—"And thou,
Unhappy! what hast thou to plead,
Why I denounce not on thy deed
That awful doom which canons tell 525
Shuts paradise, and opens hell ;
Anathema of power so dread,
It blends the living with the dead,
Bids each good angel soar away,
And every ill one claim his prey ; 530
Expels thee from the church's care,
And deafens Heaven against thy prayer ;
Arms every hand against thy life,
Bans all who aid thee in the strife,
Nay, each whose succour, cold and scant, 535
With meanest alms relieves thy want ;
Haunts thee while living,—and, when dead,
Dwells on thy yet devoted head,
Rends Honour's scutcheon from thy hearse,
Stills o'er thy bier the holy verse, 540
And spurns thy corpse from hallow'd ground,
Flung like vile carrion to the hound ;
Such is the dire and desperate doom
For sacrilege, decreed by Rome ;
And such the well-deserved meed 545
Of thine unhallow'd, ruthless deed."—

XXIX.

"Abbot!" The Bruce replied, "thy charge
 It boots not to dispute at large.
 This much, howe'er, I bid thee know,
 No selfish vengeance dealt the blow, 550
 For Comyn died his country's foe.
 Nor blame I friends whose ill-timed speed
 Fulfill'd my soon-repent'd deed,
 Nor censure those from whose stern tongue
 The dire anathema has rung. 555
 I only blame mine own wild ire,
 By Scotland's wrongs incensed to fire.
 Heaven knows my purpose to atone,
 Far as I may, the evil done,
 And hears a penitent's appeal 560
 From papal curse and prelate's zeal.
 My first and dearest task achieved,
 Fair Scotland from her thrall relieved,
 Shall many a priest in cope and stole
 Say requiem for Red Comyn's soul, 565
 While I the blessed cross advance,
 And expiate this unhappy chance,
 In Palestine, with sword and lance.
 But, while content the church should know
 My conscience owns the debt I owe, 570
 Unto De Argentine and Lorn
 The name of traitor I return,
 Bid them defiance stern and high,
 And give them in their throats the lie!
 These brief words spoke, I speak no more. 575
 Do what thou wilt; my shrift is o'er."

XXX.

Like man by prodigy amazed,
 Upon the King the Abbot gazed;
 Then o'er his pallid features glance
 Convulsions of ecstatic trance. 580
 His breathing came more thick and fast,
 And from his pale blue eyes were cast
 Strange rays of wild and wandering light;
 Uprise his locks of silver white,
 Flush'd is his brow, through every vein 585
 In azure tide the currents strain,
 And undistinguish'd accents broke
 The awful silence ere he spoke.

XXXI.

"De Bruce! I rose with purpose dread
 To speak my curse upon thy head, 590
 And give thee as an outcast o'er
 To him who burns to shed thy gore;—
 But, like the Midianite of old,
 Who stood on Zophim, heaven-controll'd,
 I feel within mine aged breast 595
 A power that will not be repress'd.
 It prompts my voice, it swells my veins,
 It burns, it maddens, it constrains!—
 De Bruce, thy sacrilegious blow
 Hath at God's altar slain thy foe: 600
 O'ermaster'd yet by high behest,
 I bless thee, and thou shalt be bless'd!"
 He spoke, and o'er the astonish'd throng
 Was silence, awful, deep, and long.

XXXII.

Again that light has fired his eye, 605
Again his form swells bold and high,
The broken voice of age is gone,
'Tis vigorous manhood's lofty tone:—
“Thrice vanquish'd on the battle-plain,
Thy followers slaughter'd, fled, or ta'en, 610
A hunted wanderer on the wild,
On foreign shores a man exil'd,
Disown'd, deserted, and distress'd,
I bless thee, and thou shalt be bless'd!
Bless'd in the hall and in the field, 615
Under the mantle as the shield.
Avenger of thy country's shame,
Restorer of her injured fame,
Bless'd in thy sceptre and thy sword,
De Bruce, fair Scotland's rightful Lord, 620
Bless'd in thy deeds and in thy fame,
What lengthen'd honours wait thy name!
In distant ages, sire to son
Shall tell thy tale of freedom won,
And teach his infants, in the use 625
Of earliest speech, to falter Bruce.
Go, then, triumphant! sweep along
Thy course, the theme of many a song!
The Power, whose dictates swell my breast,
Hath bless'd thee, and thou shalt be bless'd!— 630
Enough—my short-lived strength decays,
And sinks the momentary blaze.—
Heaven hath our destined purpose broke,
Not here must nuptial vow be spoke;

Brethren, our errand here is o'er, 635
Our task discharged.—Unmoor, unmoor!"—
His priests received the exhausted Monk,
As breathless in their arms he sunk.
Punctual his orders to obey,
The train refused all longer stay, 640
Embark'd, raised sail, and bore away.

CANTO THIRD.

HAST thou not mark'd, when o'er thy startled head
Sudden and deep the thunder-peal has roll'd,
How, when its echoes fell, a silence dead
Sunk on the wood, the meadow, and the wold?
The rye-grass shakes not on the sod-built fold,
The rustling aspen's leaves are mute and still,
The wall-flower waves not on the ruin'd hold,
Till, murmuring distant first, then near and shrill,
The savage whirlwind wakes, and sweeps the groaning hill!

II.

Artornish ! such a silence sunk
Upon thy halls, when that grey Monk
His prophet-speech had spoke ;
And his obedient brethren's sail
Was stretch'd to meet the southern gale
Before a whisper woke.
Then murmuring sounds of doubt and fear,
Close pour'd in many an anxious ear,
The solemn stillness broke ;
And still they gazed with eager guess,
Where, in an oriel's deep recess,
The Island Prince seem'd bent to press
What Lorn, by his impatient cheer,
And gesture fierce, scarce deign'd to hear.

III.

Starting at length with frowning look,
His hand he clench'd, his head he shook, 25
And sternly flung apart;—
“And deem'st thou me so mean of mood,
As to forget the mortal feud,
And clasp the hand with blood imbrued
From my dear Kinsman's heart? 30
Is this thy rede?—a due return
For ancient league and friendship sworn!
But well our mountain proverb shows
The faith of Islesmen ebbs and flows.
Be it even so—believe, ere long, 35
He that now bears shall wreak the wrong.—
Call Edith—call the Maid of Lorn!
My sister, slaves!—for further scorn,
Be sure nor she nor I will stay.—
Away, De Argentine, away!— 40
We nor ally nor brother know,
In Bruce's friend, or England's foe.”

IV.

But who the Chieftain's rage can tell,
When, sought from lowest dungeon cell
To highest tower the castle round, 45
No Lady Edith was there found!
He shouted, “Falsehood!—treachery!—
Revenge and blood!—a lordly meed
To him that will avenge the deed!
A Baron's lands!”—His frantic mood 50
Was scarcely by the news withstood,

That Morag shared his sister's flight,
 And that, in hurry of the night,
 'Scaped noteless, and without remark,
 Two strangers sought the Abbot's bark.— 55
 "Man every galley!—fly—pursue!
 The priest his treachery shall rue!
 Ay, and the time shall quickly come,
 When we shall hear the thanks that Rome
 Will pay his feigned prophecy!" 60
 Such was fierce Lorn's indignant cry;
 And Cormac Doil in haste obey'd,
 Hoisted his sail, his anchor weigh'd,
 (For, glad of each pretext for spoil,
 A pirate sworn was Cormac Doil.) 65
 But others, lingering, spoke apart,—
 "The Maid has given her maiden heart
 To Ronald of the Isles,
 And, fearful lest her brother's word
 Bestow her on that English Lord, 70
 She seeks Iona's piles,
 And wisely deems it best to dwell
 A votaress in the holy cell,
 Until these feuds so fierce and fell
 The Abbot reconciles." 75

V.

As, impotent of ire, the hall
 Echoed to Lorn's impatient call,
 "My horse, my mantle, and my train!
 Let none who honours Lorn remain!"—
 Courteous, but stern, a bold request 80
 To Bruce De Argentine express'd.

"Lord Earl," he said,—“I cannot chuse
 But yield such title to the Bruce,
 Though name and earldom both are gone,
 Since he braced rebel's armour on— 85
 But, Earl or Serf—rude phrase was thine
 Of late, and launch'd at Argentine;
 Such as compels me to demand
 Redress of honour at thy hand.
 We need not to each other tell, 90
 That both can wield their weapons well;
 Then do me but the soldier grace,
 This glove upon thy helm to place
 Where we may meet in fight;
 And I will say, as still I've said, 95
 Though by ambition far misled,
 Thou art a noble knight.”—

VI.

"And I," the princely Bruce replied,
 "Might term it stain on knighthood's pride,
 That the bright sword of Argentine 100
 Should in a tyrant's quarrel shine;
 But, for your brave request,
 Be sure the honour'd pledge you gave
 In every battle-field shall wave
 Upon my helmet-crest; 105
 Believe, that if my hasty tongue
 Hath done thine honour causeless wrong,
 It shall be well redress'd.
 Not dearer to my soul was glove,
 Bestow'd in youth by lady's love, 110

Than this which thou hast given !
 Thus, then, my noble foe I greet ;
 Health and high fortune till we meet,
 And then—what pleases Heaven.”

VII.

Thus parted they—for now, with sound 115
 Like waves roll'd back from rocky ground,
 The friends of Lorn retire ;
 Each mainland chieftain, with his train,
 Draws to his mountain towers again,
 Pondering how mortal schemes prove vain, 120
 And mortal hopes expire.
 But through the castle double guard,
 By Ronald's charge, kept wakeful ward,
 Wicket and gate were trebly barr'd,
 By beam and bolt and chain ; 125
 Then of the guests, in courteous sort,
 He pray'd excuse for mirth broke short,
 And bade them in Artornish fort
 In confidence remain.
 Now torch and menial tendance led 130
 Chieftain and knight to bower and bed,
 And beads were told, and aves said,
 And soon they sunk away
 Into such sleep, as wont to shed
 Oblivion on the weary head, 135
 After a toilsome day.

VIII.

But soon uproused, the Monarch cried
To Edward slumbering by his side,
 "Awake, or sleep for aye!
Even now there jarr'd a secret door— 140
A taper-light gleams on the floor—
 Up, Edward, up, I say!
Some one glides in like midnight ghost—
Nay, strike not! 'tis our noble Host."
Advancing then his taper's flame, 145
Ronald stept forth, and with him came
 Dunvegan's chief—each bent the knee
 To Bruce in sign of fealty,
 And proffer'd him his sword,
 And hail'd him, in a monarch's style, 150
 As king of mainland and of isle,
 And Scotland's rightful lord.
"And O," said Ronald, "Own'd of Heaven!
Say, is my erring youth forgiven,
By falsehood's arts from duty driven, 155
 Who rebel falchion drew,
Yet ever to thy deeds of fame,
Even while I strove against thy claim,
 Paid homage just and true?"—
"Alas! dear youth, the unhappy time," 160
Answer'd the Bruce, "must bear the crime,
 Since, guiltier far than you,
Even I"—he paused; for Falkirk's woes
Upon his conscious soul arose.
The Chieftain to his breast he press'd, 165
And in a sigh conceal'd the rest.

IX.

They proffer'd aid, by arms and might, /
To repossess him in his right;
But well their counsels must be weigh'd,
Ere banners raised and musters made, 170
For English hire and Lorn's intrigues
Bound many chiefs in southern leagues.
In answer, Bruce his purpose bold
To his new vassals frankly told.
"The winter worn in exile o'er, 175
I long'd for Carrick's kindred shore.
I thought upon my native Ayr,
And long'd to see the burly fare
That Clifford makes, whose lordly call
Now echoes through my father's hall. 180
But first my course to Arran led,
Where valiant Lennox gathers head,
And on the sea, by tempest toss'd,
Our barks dispersed, our purpose cross'd,
Mine own, a hostile sail to shun, 185
Far from her destined course had run,
When that wise will, which masters ours,
Compell'd us to your friendly towers."

X.

Then Torquil spoke: "The time craves speed!
We must not linger in our deed, 190
But instant pray our Sovereign Liege,
To shun the perils of a siege.
The vengeful Lorn, with all his powers,
Lies but too near Artornish towers,
And England's light-armed vessels ride, 195
Not distant far, the waves of Clyde,

Prompt at these tidings to unmoor,
And sweep each strait, and guard each shore.
Then, till this fresh alarm pass by,
Secret and safe my Liege must lie 200
In the far bounds of friendly Skye,
Torquil thy pilot and thy guide.”—
“Not so, brave Chieftain,” Ronald cried;
“Myself will on my Sovereign wait,
And raise in arms the men of Sleate, 205
Whilst thou, renown’d where chiefs debate,
Shalt sway their souls by council sage,
And awe them by thy locks of age.”—
—“And if my words in weight shall fail,
This ponderous sword shall turn the scale.”— 210

XI.

“The scheme,” said Bruce, “contents me well;
Meantime, ’twere best that Isabel,
For safety, with my bark and crew,
Again to friendly Erin drew.
There Edward, too, shall with her wend, 215
In need to cheer her and defend,
And muster up each scatter’d friend.”—
Here seem’d it as Lord Ronald’s ear
Would other counsel gladlier hear;
But, all achieved as soon as plann’d, 220
Both barks, in secret arm’d and mann’d,
From out the haven bore;
On different voyage forth they ply,
This for the coast of winged Skye,
And that for Erin’s shore. 225

XII.

With Bruce and Ronald bides the tale.
To favouring winds they gave the sail,
Till Mull's dark headlands scarce they knew,
And Ardnamurchan's hills were blue.
But then the squalls blew close and hard, 230
And, fain to strike the galley's yard
And take them to the oar,
With these rude seas in weary plight
They strove the livelong day and night,
Nor till the dawning had a sight 235
Of Skye's romantic shore.
Where Coolin stoops him to the west,
They saw upon his shiver'd crest
The sun's arising gleam ;
But such the labour and delay, 240
Ere they were moor'd in Scavigh bay,
(For calmer heaven compell'd to stay,)
He shot a western beam.
Then Ronald said, "If true mine eye,
These are the savage wilds that lie 245
North of Strathnardill and Dunsbye ;
No human foot comes here,
And, since these adverse breezes blow,
If my good Liege love hunter's bow,
What hinders that on land we go, 250
And strike a mountain-deer ?
Allan, my page, shall with us wend ;
A bow full deftly can he bend,
And, if we meet a herd, may send
A shaft shall mend our cheer." 255

Then each took bow and bolts in hand,
Their row-boat launch'd, and leapt to land,
And left their skiff and train
Where 'a wild stream, with headlong shock,
Came brawling down its bed of rock, 260
To mingle with the main.

XIII.

A while their route they silent made,
As men who stalk for mountain-deer,
Till the good Bruce to Ronald said,
"St Mary! what a scene is here! 265
I've traversed many a mountain-strand,
Abroad and in my native land,
And it has been my lot to tread
Where safety more than pleasure led;
Thus, many a waste I've wander'd o'er, 270
Clombe many a crag, cross'd many a moor,
But, by my halidome,
A scene so rude, so wild as this,
Yet so sublime in barrenness,
Ne'er did my wandering footsteps press, 275
Where'er I happ'd to roam."

XIV.

No marvel thus the Monarch spake;
For rarely human eye has known
A scene so stern as that dread lake
With its dark ledge of barren stone. 280

Seems that primeval earthquake's sway
 Hath rent a strange and shatter'd way
 Through the rude bosom of the hill,
 And that each naked precipice,
 Sable ravine, and dark abyss, 285
 Tells of the outrage still.
 The wildest glen, but this, can show
 Some touch of Nature's genial glow;
 On high Benmore green mosses grow,
 And heath-bells bud in deep Glencroe, 290
 And copse on Cruchan-Ben;
 But here,—above, around, below,
 On mountain or in glen,
 Nor tree, nor shrub, nor plant, nor flower,
 Nor aught of vegetative power, 295
 The weary eye may ken.
 For all is rocks at random thrown,
 Black waves, bare crags, and banks of stone,
 As if were here denied
 The summer sun, the spring's sweet dew, 300
 That clothe with many a varied hue
 The bleakest mountain-side.

XV.

And wilder, forward as they wound,
 Were the proud cliffs and lake profound.
 Huge terraces of granite black 305
 Afforded rude and cumber'd track;
 For from the mountain hoar,
 Hurl'd headlong in some night of fear,
 When yell'd the wolf and fled the deer,
 Loose crags had toppled o'er; 310

And some chance-poised and balanced lay,
 So that a stripling arm might sway
 A mass no host could raise,
 In Nature's rage at random thrown,
 Yet trembling like the Druid's stone 315
 On its precarious base.
 The evening mists, with ceaseless change,
 Now clothed the mountains' lofty range,
 Now left their foreheads bare,
 And round the skirts their mantle furl'd, 320
 Or on the sable waters curl'd,
 Or on the eddy breezes whirl'd,
 Dispersed in middle air.
 And oft, condensed, at once they lower,
 When, brief and fierce, the mountain shower 325
 Pours like a torrent down,
 And when return the sun's glad beams,
 Whiten'd with foam a thousand streams
 Leap from the mountain's crown.

XVI.

"This lake," said Bruce, "whose barriers drear 330
 Are precipices sharp and sheer,
 Yielding no track for goat or deer,
 Save the black shelves we tread,
 How term you its dark waves? and how
 Yon northern mountain's pathless brow, 335
 And yonder peak of dread,
 That to the evening sun uplifts
 The griesly gulfs and slaty rifts,
 Which seam its shiver'd head?"—

"Coriskin call the dark lake's name,
 Coolin the ridge, as bards proclaim,
 From old Cuchullin, chief of fame.
 But bards, familiar in our isles
 Rather with Nature's frowns than smiles,
 Full oft their careless humours please
 By sportive names from scenes like these.
 I would old Torquil were to show
 His maidens with their breasts of snow,
 Or that my noble Liege were nigh
 To hear his Nurse sing lullaby!
 (The Maids—tall cliffs with breakers white,
 The Nurse—a torrent's roaring might,)
 Or that your eye could see the mood
 Of Corryvreckin's whirlpool rude,
 When dons the Hag her whiten'd hood—
 'Tis thus our islesmen's fancy frames
 For scenes so stern fantastic names."

XVII.

Answer'd the Bruce, "And musing mind
 Might here a graver moral find.
 These mighty cliffs, that heave on high
 Their naked brows to middle sky,
 Indifferent to the sun or snow,
 Where nought can fade, and nought can blow,
 May they not mark a Monarch's fate,—
 Raised high 'mid storms of strife and state,
 Beyond life's lowlier pleasures placed,
 His soul a rock, his heart a waste?
 O'er hope and love and fear aloft
 High rears his crowned head—But soft!

Look, underneath yon jutting crag 370
Are hunters and a slaughter'd stag.
Who may they be? But late you said
No steps these desert regions tread?"—

XVIII.

"So said I—and believed in sooth,"
Ronald replied, "I spoke the truth. 375
Yet now I spy, by yonder stone,
Five men—they mark us, and come on;
And by their badge on bonnet borne,
I guess them of the land of Lorn,
Foes to my Liege."—"So let it be; 380
I've faced worse odds than five to three—
—But the poor page can little aid;
Then be our battle thus array'd,
If our free passage they contest;
Cope thou with two, I'll match the rest."— 385
"Not so, my Liege—for, by my life,
This sword shall meet the treble strife;
My strength, my skill in arms, more small,
And less the loss should Ronald fall.
But islesmen soon to soldiers grow, 390
Allan has sword as well as bow,
And were my Monarch's order given,
Two shafts would make our number even."—
"No! not to save my life!" he said;
"Enough of blood rests on my head, 395
Too rashly spill'd—we soon shall know,
Whether they come as friend or foe."

XIX.

Nigh came the strangers, and more nigh;—
 Still less they pleased the Monarch's eye.
 Men were they all of evil mien, 400
 Down-look'd, unwilling to be seen;
 They moved with half-resolved pace,
 And bent on earth each gloomy face.
 The foremost two were fair array'd,
 With brogue and bonnet, trews and plaid, 405
 And bore the arms of mountaineers,
 Daggers and broadswords, bows and spears.
 The three, that lagg'd small space behind,
 Seem'd serfs of more degraded kind;
 Goat-skins or deer-hides o'er them cast, 410
 Made a rude fence against the blast;
 Their arms and feet and heads were bare,
 Matted their beards, unshorn their hair;
 For arms, the caitiffs bore in hand
 A club, an axe, a rusty brand. 415

XX.

Onward, still mute, they kept the track;—
 "Tell who ye be, or else stand back,"
 Said Bruce; "In deserts when they meet,
 Men pass not as in peaceful street."
 Still, at his stern command, they stood, 420
 And proffer'd greeting brief and rude,
 But acted courtesy so ill,
 As seem'd of fear, and not of will.
 "Wanderers we are, as you may be;
 Men hither driven by wind and sea, 425

Who, if you list to taste our cheer,
 Will share with you this fallow deer."—
 "If from the sea, where lies your bark?"—
 "Ten fathom deep in ocean dark!
 Wreck'd yesternight: but we are men, 430
 Who little sense of peril ken.
 The shades come down—the day is shut—
 Will you go with us to our hut?"—
 "Our vessel waits us in the bay;
 Thanks for your proffer—have good-day."— 435
 "Was that your galley, then, which rode
 Not far from shore when evening glow'd?"—
 "It was."—"Then spare your needless pain,
 There will she now be sought in vain.
 We saw her from the mountain head, 440
 When with St George's blazon red
 A southern vessel bore in sight,
 And yours raised sail, and took to flight."—

XXI.

"Now, by the rood, unwelcome news!"
 Thus with Lord Ronald communed Bruce; 445
 "Nor rests there light enough to show
 If this their tale be true or no.
 The men seem bred of churlish kind,
 Yet mellow nuts have hardest rind;
 We will go with them—food and fire 450
 And sheltering roof our wants require.
 Sure guard 'gainst treachery will we keep,
 And watch by turns our comrades' sleep.—
 Good fellows, thanks; your guests we'll be,
 And well will pay the courtesy. 455

Come, lead us where your lodging lies,—
 —Nay, soft! we mix not companies.—
 Show us the path o'er crag and stone,
 And we will follow you;—lead on."

XXII.

They reach'd the dreary cabin, made 460
 Of sails against a rock display'd,
 And there, on entering, found
 A slender boy, whose form and mien
 Ill suited with such savage scene,
 In cap and cloak of velvet green, 465
 Low seated on the ground.
 His garb was such as minstrels wear,
 Dark was his hue, and dark his hair,
 His youthful cheek was marr'd by care,
 His eyes in sorrow drown'd. 470
 "Whence this poor boy?"—As Ronald spoke.
 The voice his trance of anguish broke;
 As if awaked from ghastly dream,
 He raised his head with start and scream,
 And wildly gazed around; 475
 Then to the wall his face he turn'd,
 And his dark neck with blushes burn'd.

XXIII.

"Whose is the boy?" again he said.
 "By chance of war our captive made;
 He may be yours, if you should hold 480
 That music has more charms than gold;

For, though from earliest childhood mute,
 The lad can deftly touch the lute,
 And on the rote and viol play,
 And well can drive the time away 485
 For those who love such glee ;
 For me, the favouring breeze, when loud
 It pipes upon the galley's shroud,
 Makes blither melody."—
 "Hath he, then, sense of spoken sound?"— 490
 "Aye ; so his mother bade us know,
 A crone in our late shipwreck drown'd,
 And hence the silly stripling's woe.
 More of the youth I cannot say,
 Our captive but since yesterday ; 495
 When wind and weather wax'd so grim,
 We little listed think of him.—
 But why waste time in idle words?
 Sit to your cheer—unbelt your swords."
 Sudden the captive turn'd his head, 500
 And one quick glance to Ronald sped.
 It was a keen and warning look,
 And well the Chief the signal took.

XXIV.

"Kind host," he said, "our needs require
 A separate board and separate fire ; 505
 For know, that on a pilgrimage
 Wend I, my comrade, and this page.
 And, sworn to vigil and to fast,
 Long as this hallow'd task shall last,
 We never doff the plaid or sword, 510
 Or feast us at a stranger's board ;

And never share one common sleep,
 But one must still his vigil keep.
 Thus, for our separate use, good friend,
 We'll hold this hut's remoter end."— 515
 "A churlish vow," the eldest said,
 "And hard, methinks, to be obey'd.
 How say you, if, to wreak the scorn
 That pays our kindness harsh return,
 We should refuse to share our meal?"— 520
 "Then say we, that our swords are steel!
 And our vow binds us not to fast,
 Where gold or force may buy repast."
 Their host's dark brow grew keen and fell,
 His teeth are clench'd, his features swell; 525
 Yet sunk the felon's moody ire
 Before Lord Ronald's glance of fire,
 Nor could his craven courage brook
 The Monarch's calm and dauntless look.
 With laugh constrain'd,—“Let every man 530
 Follow the fashion of his clan!
 Each to his separate quarters keep,
 And feed or fast, or wake or sleep.”

XXV.

Their fire at separate distance burns,
 By turns they eat, keep guard by turns; 535
 For evil seem'd that old man's eye,
 Dark and designing, fierce yet shy.
 Still he avoided forward look,
 But slow and circumspectly took
 A circling, never-ceasing glance, 540
 By doubt and cunning mark'd at once,

Which shot a mischief-boding ray,
 From under eyebrows shagg'd and gray.
 The younger, too, who seem'd his son,
 Had that dark look the timid shun; 545
 The half-clad serfs behind them sate,
 And scowl'd a glare 'twixt fear and hate—
 Till all, as darkness onward crept,
 Couch'd down, and seem'd to sleep, or slept.
 Nor he, that boy, whose powerless tongue 550
 Must trust his eyes to wail his wrong,
 A longer watch of sorrow made,
 But stretch'd his limbs to slumber laid.

XXVI.

Not in his dangerous host confides
 The King, but wary watch provides. 555
 Ronald keeps ward till midnight past,
 Then wakes the King, young Allan last;
 Thus rank'd, to give the youthful page
 The rest required by tender age.
 What is Lord Ronald's wakeful thought, 560
 To chase the languor toil had brought?—
 (For deem not that he deign'd to throw
 Much care upon such coward foe,)—
 He thinks of lovely Isabel,
 When at her foeman's feet she fell, 565
 Nor less when, placed in princely selle,
 She glanced on him with favouring eyes,
 At Woodstocke when he won the prize.
 Nor, fair in joy, in sorrow fair,
 In pride of place as 'mid despair, 570

Must she alone engross his care.
 His thoughts to his betrothed bride,
 To Edith, turn—O how decide,
 When here his love and heart are given,
 And there his faith stands plight to Heaven! 575
 No drowsy ward 'tis his to keep,
 For seldom lovers long for sleep,
 Till sung his midnight hymn the owl,
 Answer'd the dog-fox with his howl.
 Then waked the King—at his request, 580
 Lord Ronald stretch'd himself to rest.

XXVII.

What spell was good King Robert's, say,
 To drive the weary night away?
 His was the patriot's burning thought,
 Of Freedom's battle bravely fought, 585
 Of castles storm'd, of cities freed,
 Of deep design and daring deed,
 Of England's roses reft and torn,
 And Scotland's cross in triumph worn,
 Of rout and rally, war and truce,— 590
 As heroes think, so thought the Bruce.
 No marvel, 'mid such musings high,
 Sleep shunn'd the monarch's thoughtful eye.
 Now over Coolin's eastern head
 The greyish light begins to spread, 595
 The otter to his cavern drew,
 And clamour'd shrill the wakening mew;
 Then watch'd the page—to needful rest
 The King resign'd his anxious breast.

XXVIII.

To Allan's eyes was harder task	600
The weary watch their safeties ask.	
He trimm'd the fire, and gave to shine	
With bickering light the splinter'd pine;	
Then gazed awhile, where silent laid	
Their hosts were shrouded by the plaid.	605
But little fear waked in his mind,	
For he was bred of martial kind,	
And, if to manhood he arrive,	
May match the boldest knight alive.	
Then thought he of his mother's tower,	610
His little sisters' greenwood bower,	
How there the Easter-gambols pass,	
And of Dan Joseph's lengthen'd mass.	
But still before his weary eye	
In rays prolong'd the blazes die—	615
Again he roused him—on the lake	
Look'd forth, where now the twilight-flake	
Of pale cold dawn began to wake:	
On Coolin's cliffs the mists lay furl'd,	
The morning breeze the lake had curl'd,	620
The short dark waves, heaved to the land,	
With ceaseless splash kiss'd cliff or sand;—	
It was a slumbrous sound—he turn'd	
To tales at which his youth had burn'd,	
Of pilgrim's path by demon cross'd,	625
Of sprightly elf or yelling ghost,	
Of the wild witch's baneful cot,	
And mermaid's alabaster grot,	
Who bathes her limbs in sunless well	
Deep in Strathaird's enchanted cell.	630

Thither in fancy rapt he flies,
And on his sight the vaults arise;
That hut's dark walls he sees no more,
His foot is on the marble floor,
And o'er his head the dazzling spars 635
Gleam like a firmament of stars!
—Hark! hears he not the sea-nymph speak
Her anger in that thrilling shriek!—
No! all too late, with Allan's dream
Mingled the captive's warning scream. 640
As from the ground he strives to start,
A ruffian's dagger finds his heart!
Upward he casts his dizzy eyes,...
Murmurs his master's name,...and dies!

XXIX.

Not so awoke the King! his hand 645
Snatch'd from the flame a knotted brand,
The nearest weapon of his wrath;
With this he cross'd the murderer's path,
And venged young Allan well!
The spatter'd brain and bubbling blood 650
Hiss'd on the half-extinguish'd wood,
The miscreant gasp'd and fell!
Nor rose in peace the Island Lord;
One caitiff died upon his sword,
And one beneath his grasp lies prone, 655
In mortal grapple overthrown.
But while Lord Ronald's dagger drank
The life-blood from his panting flank,

The Father-ruffian of the band
 Behind him rears a coward hand! 660
 —O for a moment's aid,
 Till Bruce, who deals no double blow,
 Dash to the earth another foe,
 Above his comrade laid!—
 And it is gain'd—the captive sprung 665
 On the raised arm, and closely clung,
 And, ere he shook him loose,
 The master'd felon press'd the ground,
 And gasp'd beneath a mortal wound,
 While o'er him stands the Bruce. 670

XXX.

“Miscreant! while lasts thy flitting spark,
 Give me to know the purpose dark,
 That arm'd thy hand with murderous knife,
 Against offenceless stranger's life?”—
 “No stranger thou!” with accent fell, 675
 Murmur'd the wretch; “I know thee well;
 And know thee for the foeman sworn
 Of my high chief, the mighty Lorn.”—
 “Speak yet again, and speak the truth
 For thy soul's sake!—from whence this youth? 680
 His country, birth, and name declare,
 And thus one evil deed repair.”—
 —“Vex me no more!...my blood runs cold...
 No more I know than I have told.
 We found him in a bark we sought 685
 With different purpose...and I thought”...
 Fate cut him short; in blood and broil,
 As he had lived, died Cormac Doil.

XXXI.

Then resting on his bloody blade,
The valiant Bruce to Ronald said, 690
“Now shame upon us both!—that boy
Lifts his mute face to heaven,
And clasps his hands, to testify
His gratitude to God on high,
For strange deliverance given. 695
His speechless gesture thanks hath paid,
Which our free tongues have left unsaid!”
He raised the youth with kindly word,
But mark’d him shudder at the sword:
He cleansed it from its hue of death, 700
And plunged the weapon in its sheath.
“Alas, poor child! unfitting part
Fate doom’d, when with so soft a heart,
And form so slight as thine,
She made thee first a pirate’s slave, 705
Then, in his stead, a patron gave
Of wayward lot like mine;
A landless prince, whose wandering life
Is but one scene of blood and strife—
Yet scant of friends the Bruce shall be, 710
But he’ll find resting-place for thee.—
Come, noble Ronald! o’er the dead
Enough thy generous grief is paid,
And well has Allan’s fate been wroke;
Come, wend we hence—the day has broke. 715
Seek we our bark—I trust the tale
Was false, that she had hoisted sail.”

XXXII.

Yet, ere they left that charnel-cell,
The Island Lord bade sad farewell
To Allan:—"Who shall tell this tale," 720
He said, "in halls of Donagaile!
Oh, who his widow'd mother tell,
That, ere his bloom, her fairest fell!—
Rest thee, poor youth! and trust my care
For mass and knell and funeral prayer; 725
While o'er those caitiffs, where they lie,
The wolf shall snarl, the raven cry!"
And now the eastern mountain's head
On the dark lake threw lustre red;
Bright gleams of gold and purple streak 730
Ravine and precipice and peak—
(So earthly power at distance shows;
Reveals his splendour, hides his woes.)
O'er sheets of granite, dark and broad,
Rent and unequal, lay the road. 735
In sad discourse the warriors wind,
And the mute captive moves behind.

CANTO FOURTH.

STRANGER! if e'er thine ardent step hath traced
The northern realms of ancient Caledon,
Where the proud Queen of Wilderness hath placed
By lake and cataract her lonely throne;
Sublime but sad delight thy soul hath known, 5
Gazing on pathless glen and mountain high,
Listing where from the cliffs the torrents thrown
Mingle their echoes with the eagle's cry,
And with the sounding lake, and with the moaning sky.

Yes! 'twas sublime, but sad.—The loneliness 10
Loaded thy heart, the desert tired thine eye;
And strange and awful fears began to press
Thy bosom with a stern solemnity.
Then hast thou wish'd some woodman's cottage nigh,
Something that show'd of life, though low and mean; 15
Glad sight, its curling wreath of smoke to spy,
Glad sound its cock's blithe carol would have been,
Or children whooping wild beneath the willows green.

Such are the scenes, where savage grandeur wakes
An awful thrill that softens into sighs; 20
Such feelings rouse them by dim Rannoch's lakes,
In dark Glencoe such gloomy raptures rise:
Or farther, where, beneath the northern skies,
Chides wild Loch-Eribol his caverns hoar—
But, be the minstrel judge, they yield the prize 25
Of desert dignity to that dread shore,
That sees grim Coolin rise, and hears Coriskin roar.

II.

Through such wild scenes the champion pass'd,
When bold halloo and bugle-blast
Upon the breeze came loud and fast. 30
"There," said the Bruce, "rung Edward's horn!
What can have caused such brief return?
And see, brave Ronald,—see him dart
O'er stock and stone like hunted hart,
Precipitate, as is the use, 35
In war or sport, of Edward Bruce.
—He marks us, and his eager cry
Will tell his news ere he be nigh."

III.

Loud Edward shouts, "What make ye here,
Warring upon the mountain-deer, 40
When Scotland wants her King?
A bark from Lennox cross'd our track,
With her in speed I hurried back,
These joyful news to bring—
The Stuart stirs in Teviotdale, 45
And Douglas wakes his native vale;
Thy storm-toss'd fleet hath won its way
With little loss to Brodick-Bay,
And Lennox, with a gallant band,
Waits but thy coming and command 50
To waft them o'er to Carrick strand.
There are blithe news!—but mark the close!
Edward, the deadliest of our foes,
As with his host he northward pass'd,
Hath on the Borders breathed his last " 55

IV.

Still stood the Bruce—his steady cheek
Was little wont his joy to speak,

But then his colour rose :

“Now, Scotland ! shortly shalt thou see,
With God’s high will, thy children free

60

And vengeance on thy foes !

Yet to no sense of selfish wrongs,
Bear witness with me, Heaven, belongs

My joy o’er Edward’s bier ;

I took my knighthood at his hand,
And lordship held of him and land,

65

And well may vouch it here,

That, blot the story from his page
Of Scotland ruin’d in his rage,

You read a monarch brave and sage

70

And to his people dear.”—

“Let London’s burghers mourn her Lord,
And Croydon monks his praise record,”

The eager Edward said ;

“Eternal as his own, my hate

75

Surmounts the bounds of mortal fate,

And dies not with the dead !

Such hate was his on Solway’s strand,
When vengeance clench’d his palsied hand,
That pointed yet to Scotland’s land,

80

As his last accents pray’d

Disgrace and curse upon his heir,

If he one Scottish head should spare,

Till stretch’d upon the bloody lair

Each rebel corpse was laid !

85

Such hate was his, when his last breath
Renounced the peaceful house of death,
And bade his bones to Scotland's coast
Be borne by his remorseless host,
As if his dead and stony eye 90
Could still enjoy her misery!
Such hate was his—dark, deadly, long;
Mine,—as enduring, deep, and strong!”—

V.

“Let women, Edward, war with words,
With curses monks, but men with swords: 95
Nor doubt of living foes, to sate
Deepest revenge and deadliest hate.
Now, to the sea! behold the beach,
And see the galleys' pendants stretch
Their fluttering length down favouring gale! 100
Aboard, aboard! and hoist the sail.
Hold we our way for Arran first,
Where meet in arms our friends dispersed;
Lennox the loyal, De la Haye,
And Boyd the bold in battle fray. 105
I long the hardy band to head,
And see once more my standard spread.—
Does noble Ronald share our course,
Or stay to raise his island force?”—
“Come weal, come woe, by Bruce's side,” 110
Replied the Chief, “will Ronald bide.
And since two galleys yonder ride,
Be mine, so please my liege, dismiss'd
To wake to arms the clans of Uist,

And all who hear the Minche's roar,
On the Long Island's lonely shore. 115
The nearer Isles, with slight delay,
Ourselves may summon in our way;
And soon on Arran's shore shall meet,
With Terquil's aid, a gallant fleet, 120
If aught avails their Chieftain's hest
Among the islesmen of the west."

VI.

Thus was their venturous council said.
But, ere their sails the galleys spread,
Coriskin dark and Coolin high 125
Echoed the dirge's doleful cry.
Along that sable lake pass'd slow,—
Fit scene for such a sight of woe,—
The sorrowing islesmen, as they bore
The murder'd Allan to the shore. 130
At every pause, with dismal shout,
Their coronach of grief rung out,
And ever, when they moved again,
The pipes resumed their clamorous strain,
And, with the pibroch's shrilling wail, 135
Mourn'd the young heir of Donagaile.
Round and around, from cliff and cave,
His answer stern old Coolin gave,
Till high upon his misty side
Languish'd the mournful notes, and died. 140
For never sounds, by mortal made,
Attain'd his high and haggard head,
That echoes but the tempest's moan,
Or the deep thunder's rending groan.

VII.

Merrily, merrily bounds the bark, 145
 She bounds before the gale,
The mountain breeze from Ben-na-darch
 Is joyous in her sail !
With fluttering sound like laughter hoarse,
 The cords and canvass strain, 150
The waves, divided by her force,
In rippling eddies chased her course,
 As if they laugh'd again.
Not down the breeze more blithely flew,
Skimming the wave, the light sea-mew, 155
 Than the gay galley bore
Her course upon that favouring wind,
And Coolin's crest has sunk behind,
 And Slapin's cavern'd shore.
'Twas then that warlike signals wake 160
Dunscaith's dark towers and Eisord's lake,
And soon, from Cavilgarrigh's head,
Thick wreaths of eddying smoke were spread ;
A summons these of war and wrath
To the brave clans of Sleat and Strath, 165
 And, ready at the sight,
Each warrior to his weapons sprung,
And targe upon his shoulder flung,
 Impatient for the fight.
Mac-Kinnon's chief, in warfare gray, 170
Had charge to muster their array,
And guide their barks to Brodick-Bay.

VIII.

Signal of Ronald's high command,
 A beacon gleam'd o'er sea and land,
 From Canna's tower, that, steep and gray, 175
 Like falcon-nest o'erhangs the bay.
 Seek not the giddy crag to climb,
 To view the turret scathed by time;
 It is a task of doubt and fear
 To aught but goat or mountain-deer. 180
 But rest thee on the silver beach,
 And let the aged herdsman teach
 His tale of former day;
 His cur's wild clamour he shall chide,
 And for thy seat by ocean's side, 185
 His varied plaid display;
 Then tell, how with their Chieftain came,
 In ancient times, a foreign dame
 To yonder turret gray.
 Stern was her Lord's suspicious mind, 190
 Who in so rude a jail confined
 So soft and fair a thrall!
 And oft when moon on ocean slept,
 That lovely lady sate and wept
 Upon the castle-wall, 195
 And turn'd her eye to southern climes,
 And thought perchance of happier times,
 And touch'd her lute by fits, and sung
 Wild ditties in her native tongue.
 And still, when on the cliff and bay 200
 Placid and pale the moonbeams play,
 And every breeze is mute,
 Upon the lone Hebridean's ear

Steals a strange pleasure mix'd with fear,
 While from that cliff he seems to hear 205
 The murmur of a lute,
 And sounds, as of a captive lone,
 That mourns her woes in tongue unknown.—
 Strange is the tale—but all too long
 Already hath it staid the song— 210
 Yet who may pass them by,
 That crag and tower in ruins gray,
 Nor to their hapless tenant pay
 The tribute of a sigh!

IX.

Merrily, merrily bounds the bark 215
 O'er the broad ocean driven,
 Her path by Ronin's mountains dark
 The steersman's hand hath given.
 And Ronin's mountains dark have sent
 Their hunters to the shore, 220
 And each his ashen bow unbent,
 And gave his pastime o'er,
 And at the Island Lord's command,
 For hunting spear took warrior's brand.
 On Scooreigg next a warning light 225
 Summon'd her warriors to the fight;
 A numerous race, ere stern Macleod
 O'er their bleak shores in vengeance strode,
 When all in vain the ocean-cave
 Its refuge to his victims gave. 230
 The Chief, relentless in his wrath,
 With blazing heath blockades the path;

In dense and stifling volumes roll'd,
 The vapour fill'd the cavern'd hold!
 The warrior-threat, the infant's plain, 235
 The mother's screams, were heard in vain;
 The vengeful Chief maintains his fires,
 Till in the vault a tribe expires!
 The bones which strew that cavern's gloom,
 Too well attest their dismal doom. 240

X.

Merrily, merrily goes the bark
 On a breeze from the northward free,
 So shoots through the morning sky the lark,
 Or the swan through the summer sea.
 The shores of Mull on the eastward lay, 245
 And Ulva dark and Colonsay,
 And all the group of islets gay
 That guard famed Staffa round.
 Then all unknown its columns rose,
 Where dark and undisturb'd repose 250
 The cormorant had found,
 And the shy seal had quiet home,
 And welter'd in that wondrous dome,
 Where, as to shame the temples deck'd
 By skill of earthly architect, 255
 Nature herself, it seem'd, would raise
 A Minster to her Maker's praise!
 Not for a meaner use ascend
 Her columns, or her arches bend;
 Nor of a theme less solemn tells 260
 That mighty surge that ebbs and swells,

And still, between each awful pause,
From the high vault an answer draws
In varied tone prolong'd and high,
That mocks the organ's melody. 265
Nor doth its entrance front in vain
To old Iona's holy fane,
That Nature's voice might seem to say,
"Well hast thou done, frail Child of clay!
Thy humble powers that stately shrine 270
Task'd high and hard—but witness mine!"

XI.

Merrily, merrily goes the bark,
Before the gale she bounds;
So darts the dolphin from the shark,
Or the deer before the hounds. 275
They left Loch-Tua on their lee,
And they waken'd the men of the wild Tiree,
And the Chief of the sandy Coll;
They paused not at Columba's isle,
Though peal'd the bells from the holy pile 280
With long and measured toll;
No time for matin or for mass,
And the sounds of the holy summons pass
Away in the billows' roll.
Lochbuie's fierce and warlike Lord 285
Their signal saw, and grasp'd his sword,
And verdant Ilay call'd her host,
And the clans of Jura's rugged coast
Lord Ronald's call obey,
And Scarba's isle, whose tortured shore 290
Still rings to Corrievreken's roar,
And lonely Colonsay;

—Scenes sung by him who sings no more !
 His bright and brief career is o'er,
 And mute his tuneful strains ;
 Quench'd is his lamp of varied lore,
 That loved the light of song to pour ;
 A distant and a deadly shore
 Has LEYDEN'S cold remains !

295

XII.

Ever the breeze blows merrily,
 But the galley ploughs no more the sea.
 Lest, rounding wild Cantire, they meet
 The southern foeman's watchful fleet,
 They held unwonted way ;—
 Up Tarbat's western lake they bore,
 Then dragg'd their bark the isthmus o'er,
 As far as Kilmaconnel's shore,
 Upon the eastern bay.

300

It was a wondrous sight to see
 Topmast and pennon glitter free,
 High raised above the greenwood tree,
 As on dry land the galley moves
 By cliff and copse and alder groves.
 Deep import from that selcouth sign,
 Did many a mountain Seer divine,
 For ancient legends told the Gael,
 That when a royal bark should sail

305

310

315

 O'er Kilmaconnel moss,
 Old Albyn should in fight prevail,
 And every foe should faint and quail
 Before her silver Cross.

320

XIII.

Now launch'd once more, the inland sea
 They furrow with fair augury,
 And steer for Arran's isle ;
 The sun, ere yet he sunk behind 325
 Ben-Ghoil, "the Mountain of the Wind,"
 Gave his grim peaks a greeting kind,
 And bade Loch Ranza smile.
 Thither their destined course they drew ;
 It seem'd the isle her monarch knew, 330
 So brilliant was the landward view,
 The ocean so serene ;
 Each puny wave in diamonds roll'd
 O'er the calm deep, where hues of gold
 With azure strove and green. 335
 The hill, the vale, the tree, the tower,
 Glow'd with the tints of evening's hour,
 The beach was silver sheen,
 The wind breathed soft as lover's sigh,
 And, oft renew'd, seem'd oft to die, 340
 With breathless pause between.
 O who with speech of war and woes
 Would wish to break the soft repose
 Of such enchanting scene !

XIV.

Is it of war Lord Ronald speaks ? 345
 The blush that dyes his manly cheeks,
 The timid look, and downcast eye,
 And faltering voice the theme deny.

And good King Robert's brow express'd,
 He ponder'd o'er some high request, 350
 As doubtful to approve;
 Yet in his eye and lip the while,
 Dwelt the half-pitying glance and smile,
 Which manhood's graver mood beguile,
 When lovers talk of love. 355
 Anxious his suit Lord Ronald pled;
 —"And for my bride betrothed," he said,
 "My Liege has heard the rumour spread
 Of Edith from Artornish fled.
 Too hard her fate—I claim no right 360
 To blame her for her hasty flight;
 Be joy and happiness her lot!—
 But she hath fled the bridal-knot,
 And Lorn recall'd his promised plight
 In the assembled chieftains' sight.— 365
 When, to fulfil our fathers' band,
 I proffer'd all I could—my hand—
 I was repulsed with scorn;
 Mine honour I should ill assert,
 And worse the feelings of my heart, 370
 If I should play a suitor's part
 Again, to pleasure Lorn."—

XV.

"Young Lord," the Royal Bruce replied,
 "That question must the Church decide;
 Yet seems it hard, since rumours state 375
 Edith takes Clifford for her mate,
 The very tie, which she hath broke,
 To thee should still be binding yoke.

But, for my sister Isabel—
The mood of woman who can tell? 380
I guess the Champion of the Rock,
Victorious in the tourney shock,
That knight unknown, to whom the prize
She dealt,—had favour in her eyes;
But since our brother Nigel's fate, 385
Our ruin'd house and hapless state,
From worldly joy and hope estranged,
Much is the hapless mourner changed.
Perchance," here smiled the noble King,
"This tale may other musings bring. 390
Soon shall we know—yon mountains hide
The little convent of Saint Bride;
There, sent by Edward, she must stay,
Till fate shall give more prosperous day;
And thither will I bear thy suit, 395
Nor will thine advocate be mute."

XVI.

As thus they talk'd in earnest mood,
That speechless boy beside them stood.
He stoop'd his head against the mast,
And bitter sobs came thick and fast, 400
A grief that would not be repress'd,
But seem'd to burst his youthful breast.
His hands, against his forehead held,
As if by force his tears repell'd,
But through his fingers, long and slight, 405
Fast trill'd the drops of crystal bright.
Edward, who walk'd the deck apart,
First spied this conflict of the heart.

Thoughtless as brave, with bluntness kind
He sought to cheer the sorrower's mind; 410
By force the slender hand he drew
From those poor eyes that stream'd with dew.
As in his hold the stripling strove,—
('Twas a rough grasp, though meant in love,)
Away his tears the warrior swept, 415
And bade shame on him that he wept.
"I would to heaven, thy helpless tongue
Could tell me who hath wrought thee wrong!
For, were he of our crew the best,
The insult went not unredress'd. 420
Come, cheer thee; thou art now of age
To be a warrior's gallant page;
Thou shalt be mine!—a palfrey fair
O'er hill and holt my boy shall bear,
To hold my bow in hunting grove, 425
Or speed on errand to my love;
For well I wot thou wilt not tell
The temple where my wishes dwell."

XVII.

Bruce interposed,—“Gay Edward, no,
This is no youth to hold thy bow, 430
To fill thy goblet, or to bear
Thy message light to lighter fair.
Thou art a patron all too wild
And thoughtless, for this orphan child.
See'st thou not how apart he steals, 435
Keeps lonely couch, and lonely meals?
Fitter by far in yon calm cell
To tend our sister Isabel,

With father Augustin to share
The peaceful change of convent prayer, 440
Than wander wild adventures through
With such a reckless guide as you.”—
“Thanks, brother!” Edward answer’d gay,
“For the high laud thy words convey!
But we may learn some future day, 445
If thou or I can this poor boy
Protect the best, or best employ.
Meanwhile, our vessel nears the strand;
Launch we the boat, and seek the land.”

XVIII.

To land King Robert lightly sprung, 450
And thrice aloud his bugle rung
With note prolong’d and varied strain,
Till bold Ben-ghoil replied again.
Good Douglas then and De la Haye
Had in a glen a hart at bay, 455
And Lennox cheer’d the laggard hounds,
When waked that horn the greenwood bounds.
“It is the foe!” cried Boyd, who came
In breathless haste with eye on flame,—
“It is the foe!—Each valiant lord 460
Fling by his bow, and grasp his sword!”—
“Not so,” replied the good Lord James,
“That blast no English bugle claims.
Oft have I heard it fire the fight,
Cheer the pursuit, or stop the flight. 465
Dead were my heart, and deaf mine ear,
If Bruce should call, nor Douglas hear!
Each to Loch Ranza’s margin spring;
That blast was winded by the King!”

XIX.

Fast to their mates the tidings spread, 470
And fast to shore the warriors sped.
Bursting from glen and greenwood tree,
High waked their loyal jubilee!
Around the royal Bruce they crowd,
And clasp'd his hands, and wept aloud. 475
Veterans of early fields were there,
Whose helmets press'd their hoary hair,
Whose swords and axes bore a stain
From life-blood of the red-hair'd Dane;
And boys, whose hands scarce brook'd to wield 480
The heavy sword or bossy shield.
Men too were there, that bore the scars
Impress'd in Albyn's woful wars,
At Falkirk's fierce and fatal fight,
Teyndrum's dread rout and Methven's flight; 485
The might of Douglas there was seen,
There Lennox with his graceful mien;
Kirkpatrick, Closeburn's dreaded Knight;
The Lindsay, fiery, fierce, and light;
The Heir of murder'd De la Haye, 490
And Boyd the grave, and Seton gay.
Around their King regain'd they press'd,
Wept, shouted, clasp'd him to their breast,
And young and old, and serf and lord,
And he who ne'er unsheathed a sword, 495
And he in many a peril tried,
Alike resolved the brunt to bide,
And live or die by Bruce's side!

XX.

Oh War! thou hast thy fierce delight,
Thy gleams of joy, intensely bright! 500
Such gleams, as from thy polish'd shield
Fly dazzling o'er the battle-field!
Such transports wake, severe and high,
Amid the pealing conquest-cry;
Scarce less, when after battle lost 505
Muster the remnants of a host,
And as each comrade's name they tell,
Who in the well-fought conflict fell,
Knitting stern brow o'er flashing eye,
Vow to avenge them or to die!— 510
Warriors!—and where are warriors found,
If not on martial Britain's ground?
And who, when waked with note of fire,
Love more than they the British lyre?—
Know ye not,—hearts to honour dear! 515
That joy, deep-thrilling, stern, severe,
At which the heartstrings vibrate high,
And wake the fountains of the eye?
And blame ye then the Bruce, if trace
Of tear is on his manly face, 520
When, scanty relics of the train
That hail'd at Scone his early reign,
This patriot band around him hung,
And to his knees and bosom clung?—
Blame ye the Bruce?—his brother blamed, 525
But shared the weakness, while ashamed,
With haughty laugh his head he turn'd,
And dash'd away the tear he scorn'd.

XXI.

'Tis morning, and the Convent bell
 Long time had ceased its matin knell 530
 Within thy walls, Saint Bride!
 An aged Sister sought the cell
 Assign'd to Lady Isabel,
 And hurriedly she cried,
 "Haste, gentle Lady, haste—there waits 535
 A noble stranger at the gates;
 Saint Bride's poor vot'ress ne'er has seen
 A Knight of such a princely mien;
 His errand, as he bade me tell,
 Is with the Lady Isabel." 540
 The princess rose,—for on her knee
 Low bent she told her rosary,—
 "Let him by thee his purpose teach;
 I may not give a stranger speech."—
 "Saint Bride forefend, thou royal Maid!" 545
 The portress cross'd herself, and said,—
 "Not to be prioress might I
 Debate his will, his suit deny."—
 "Has earthly shew then, simple fool,
 Power o'er a sister of thy rule, 550
 And art thou, like the worldly train,
 Subdued by splendours light and vain?"—

XXII.

"No, Lady! in old eyes like mine,
 Gauds have no glitter, gems no shine;
 Nor grace his rank attendants vain, 555
 One youthful page is all his train.

It is the form, the eye, the word,
 The bearing of that stranger Lord ;
 His stature, manly, bold, and tall,
 Built like a castle's battled wall, 560
 Yet moulded in such just degrees,
 His giant-strength seems lightsome ease.
 Close as the tendrils of the vine
 His locks upon his forehead twine,
 Jet-black, save where some touch of gray 565
 Has ta'en the youthful hue away.
 Weather and war their rougher trace
 Have left on that majestic face ;—
 But 'tis his dignity of eye !
 There, if a suppliant, would I fly, 570
 Secure, 'mid danger, wrongs, and grief,
 Of sympathy, redress, relief—
 That glance, if guilty, would I dread
 More than the doom that spoke me dead !"—
 "Enough, enough," the princess cried, 575
 "'Tis Scotland's hope, her joy, her pride !
 To meaner front was ne'er assign'd
 Such mastery o'er the common mind—
 Bestow'd thy high designs to aid,
 How long, O Heaven ! how long delay'd !— 580
 Haste, Mona, haste, to introduce
 My darling brother, royal Bruce !"

XXIII.

They met like friends who part in pain,
 And meet in doubtful hope again.
 But when subdued that fitful swell, 585
 The Bruce survey'd the humble cell ;—

"And this is thine, poor Isabel!—
 That pallet-couch and naked wall
 For room of state and bed of pall;
 For costly robes and jewels rare 590
 A string of beads and zone of hair;
 And for the trumpet's sprightly call
 To sport or banquet, grove or hall,
 The bell's grim voice divides thy care
 'Twixt hours of penitence and prayer!— 595
 O ill for thee, my royal claim
 From the First David's sainted name!
 O woe for thee, that while he sought
 His right, thy brother feebly fought!"—

XXIV.

"Now lay these vain regrets aside, 600
 And be the unshaken Bruce!" she cried.
 "For more I glory to have shared
 The woes thy venturous spirit dared,
 When raising first thy valiant band
 In rescue of thy native land, 605
 Than had fair Fortune set me down
 The partner of an empire's crown.
 And grieve not on that Pleasure's stream
 No more I drive in giddy dream,
 For Heaven the erring pilot knew, 610
 And from the gulf the vessel drew,
 Tried me with judgments stern and great,
 My house's ruin, thy defeat,
 Poor Nigel's death, till, tamed, I own,
 My hopes are fixed on Heaven alone; 615
 Nor e'er shall earthly prospects win
 My heart to this vain world of sin."—

XXV.

"Nay, Isabel, for such stern choice
 First wilt thou wait thy brother's voice;
 Then ponder if in convent scene 620
 No softer thoughts might intervene—
 Say they were of that unknown Knight,
 Victor in Woodstock's tourney-fight—
 Nay, if his name such blush you owe,
 Victorious o'er a fairer foe!" 625
 Truly his penetrating eye
 Hath caught that blush's passing dye,—
 Like the last beam of evening thrown
 On a white cloud,—just seen and gone.
 Soon with calm cheek and steady eye, 630
 The princess made composed reply:—
 "I guess my brother's meaning well;
 For not so silent is the cell,
 But we have heard the islesmen all
 Arm in thy cause at Ronald's call, 635
 And mine eye proves that Knight unknown
 And the brave Island Lord are one.—
 Had then his suit been earlier made,
 In his own name, with thee to aid,
 (But that his plighted faith forbade,) 640
 I know not.....But thy page so near?—
 This is no tale for menial's ear."

XXVI.

Still stood that page, as far apart
 As the small cell would space afford;
 With dizzy eye and bursting heart, 645
 He leant his weight on Bruce's sword,

The monarch's mantle too he bore,
 And drew the fold his visage o'er.
 "Fear not for him—in murderous strife,"
 Said Bruce, "his warning saved my life;
 650 Full seldom parts he from my side,
 And in his silence I confide,
 Since he can tell no tale again.
 He is a boy of gentle strain,
 And I have purposed he shall dwell
 655 In Augustin the chaplain's cell,
 And wait on thee, my Isabel.—
 Mind not his tears; I've seen them flow,
 As in the thaw dissolves the snow.
 'Tis a kind youth, but fanciful,
 660 Unfit against the tide to pull,
 And those that with the Bruce would sail,
 Must learn to strive with stream and gale.—
 But forward, gentle Isabel—
 My answer for Lord Ronald tell."—
 665

XXVII.

"This answer be to Ronald given—
 The heart he asks is fix'd on heaven.
 My love was like a summer flower,
 That wither'd in the wintry hour,
 670 Born but of vanity and pride,
 And with these sunny visions died.
 If further press his suit—then say,
 He should his plighted troth obey,
 Troth plighted both with ring and word,
 675 And sworn on crucifix and sword.—
 Oh, shame thee, Robert! I have seen
 Thou hast a woman's guardian been!

Even in extremity's dread hour,
When press'd on thee the Southern power,
And safety, to all human sight, 680
Was only found in rapid flight,
Thou heard'st a wretched female plain
In agony of travail-pain,
And thou didst bid thy little band
Upon the instant turn and stand, 685
And dare the worst the foe might do,
Rather than, like a knight untrue,
Leave to pursuers merciless
A woman in her last distress.—
And wilt thou now deny thine aid 690
To an oppress'd and injured maid,
Even plead for Ronald's perfidy,
And press his fickle faith on me?—
So witness Heaven, as true I vow,
Had I those earthly feelings now, 695
Which could my former bosom move
Ere taught to set its hopes above,
I'd spurn each proffer he could bring,
Till at my feet he laid the ring,
The ring and spousal contract both, 700
And fair acquittal of his oath,
By her who brooks his perjured scorn,
The ill-requited Maid of Lorn!"

XXVIII.

With sudden impulse forward sprung
The page, and on her neck he hung; 705
Then, recollected instantly,
His head he stoop'd, and bent his knee,

Kiss'd twice the hand of Isabel,
 Arose, and sudden left the cell.—
 The princess, loosen'd from his hold, 710
 Blush'd angry at his bearing bold;
 But good King Robert cried,
 "Chafe not—by signs he speaks his mind,
 He heard the plan my care design'd,
 Nor could his transports hide.— 715
 But, sister, now bethink thee well;
 No easy choice the convent cell;
 Trust, I shall play no tyrant part,
 Either to force thy hand or heart,
 Or suffer that Lord Ronald scorn, 720
 Or wrong for thee, the Maid of Lorn.
 But think,—not long the time has been,
 That thou wert wont to sigh unseen,
 And wouldst the ditties best approve,
 That told some lay of hapless love. 725
 Now are thy wishes in thy power,
 And thou art bent on cloister bower!
 O! if our Edward knew the change,
 How would his busy satire range,
 With many a sarcasm varied still 730
 On woman's wish and woman's will!"—

XXIX.

"Brother, I well believe," she said,
 "Even so would Edward's part be play'd.
 Kindly in heart, in word severe,
 A foe to thought, and grief, and fear, 735
 He holds his humour uncontroll'd;
 But thou art of another mould.

Say then to Ronald, as I say,
Unless before my feet he lay
The ring which bound the faith he swore, 740
By Edith freely yielded o'er,
He moves his suit to me no more.
Nor do I promise, even if now
He stood absolved of spousal vow,
That I would change my purpose made, 745
To shelter me in holy shade.—
Brother, for little space, farewell!
To other duties warns the bell.”—

XXX.

“Lost to the world,” King Robert said,
When he had left the royal maid, 750
“Lost to the world by lot severe,
O what a gem lies buried here,
Nipp'd by misfortune's cruel frost,
The buds of fair affection lost!—
But what have I with love to do? 755
Far sterner cares my lot pursue.
—Pent in this isle we may not lie,
Nor would it long our wants supply.
Right opposite, the mainland towers
Of my own Turnberry court our powers— 760
—Might not my father's beadsman hoar,
Cuthbert, who dwells upon the shore,
Kindle a signal-flame, to show
The time propitious for the blow?
It shall be so—some friend shall bear 765
Our mandate with despatch and care;
—Edward shall find the messenger.

That fortress ours, the island fleet
May on the coast of Carrick meet.—
O Scotland! shall it e'er be mine 770
To wreak thy wrongs in battle-line,
To raise my victor-head, and see
Thy hills, thy dales, thy people free,—
That glance of bliss is all I crave,
Betwixt my labours and my grave!" 775
Then down the hill he slowly went,
Oft pausing on the steep descent,
And reach'd the spot where his bold train
Held rustic camp upon the plain.

CANTO FIFTH.

ON fair Loch-Ranza stream'd the early day,
Thin wreaths of cottage-smoke are upward curl'd
From the lone hamlet, which her inland bay
And circling mountains sever from the world.
And there the fisherman his sail unfurl'd, 5
The goat-herd drove his kids to steep Ben-Ghoil,
Before the hut the dame her spindle twirl'd,
Courting the sunbeam as she plied her toil,—
For, wake where'er he may, Man wakes to care and coil.

But other duties call'd each convent maid, 10
Roused by the summons of the moss-grown bell;
Sung were the matins, and the mass was said,
And every sister sought her separate cell,
Such was the rule, her rosary to tell.
And Isabel has knelt in lonely prayer; 15
The sunbeam, through the narrow lattice, fell
Upon the snowy neck and long dark hair,
As stoop'd her gentle head in meek devotion there.

II.

She raised her eyes, that duty done,
When glanced upon the pavement-stone, 20
Gemm'd and enchased, a golden ring,
Bound to a scroll with silken string,

With few brief words inscribed to tell,
"This for the Lady Isabel."

Within, the writing farther bore,— 25

"'Twas with this ring his plight he swore,
With this his promise I restore ;

To her who can the heart command,

Well may I yield the plighted hand.

And O! for better fortune born, 30

Grudge not a passing sigh to mourn

Her who was Edith once of Lorn !"

One single flash of glad surprise

Just glanced from Isabel's dark eyes,

But vanish'd in the blush of shame, 35

That, as its penance, instant came.

"O thought unworthy of my race!

Selfish, ungenerous, mean, and base,

A moment's throb of joy to own,

That rose upon her hopes o'erthrown!— 40

Thou pledge of vows too well believed,

Of man ingrate and maid deceived,

Think not thy lustre here shall gain

Another heart to hope in vain!

For thou shalt rest, thou tempting gaud, 45

Where worldly thoughts are overawed,

And worldly splendours sink debased."

Then by the cross the ring she placed.

III.

Next rose the thought,—its owner far,

How came it here through bolt and bar?— 50

But the dim lattice is ajar.—

She looks abroad—the morning dew
 A light short step had brush'd anew,
 And there were foot-prints seen
 On the carved buttress rising still, 55
 Till on the mossy window-sill
 Their track effaced the green.
 The ivy twigs were torn and fray'd,
 As if some climber's steps to aid.—
 But who the hardy messenger, 60
 Whose venturous path these signs infer?—
 "Strange doubts are mine!—Mona, draw nigh;
 —Nought 'scapes old Mona's curious eye—
 What strangers, gentle mother, say,
 Have sought these holy walls to-day?"— 65
 "None, Lady, none of note or name;
 Only your brother's foot-page came,
 At peep of dawn—I pray'd him pass
 To chapel where they said the mass;
 But like an arrow he shot by, 70
 And tears seem'd bursting from his eye."

IV.

The truth at once on Isabel,
 As darted by a sunbeam fell.—
 "'Tis Edith's self!—her speechless woe,
 Her form, her looks, the secret show! 75
 —Instant, good Mona, to the bay,
 And to my royal brother say,
 I do conjure him seek my cell,
 With that mute page he loves so well."—
 "What! know'st thou not his warlike host 80
 At break of day has left our coast?

My old eyes saw them from the tower.
 At eve they couch'd in greenwood bower,
 At dawn a bugle-signal, made
 By their bold Lord, their ranks array'd ; 85
 Up sprung the spears through bush and tree,
 No time for benedicite!
 Like deer, that, rousing from their lair,
 Just shake the dewdrops from their hair,
 And toss their armed crests aloft, 90
 Such matins theirs!"—"Good mother, soft—
 Where does ^{my} brother bend his way?"—
 "As I have heard, for Brodick-Bay,
 Across the isle—of barks a score
 Lie there, 'tis said, to waft them o'er, 95
 On sudden news, to Carrick-shore."—
 "If such their purpose, deep the need,"
 Said anxious Isabel, "of speed!
 Call Father Augustine, good dame."
 The nun obey'd, the Father came. 100

V.

"Kind Father, hie without delay,
 Across the hills to Brodick-Bay.
 This message to the Bruce be given;
 I pray him by his hopes of Heaven
 That, till he speak with me, he stay! 105
 Or, if his haste brook no delay,
 That he deliver, on my suit,
 Into thy charge that stripling mute.
 Thus prays his sister Isabel
 For causes more than she may tell— 110

Away, good father!—and take heed
That life and death are on thy speed.”
His cowl the good old priest did on,
Took his piked staff and sandall’d shoon,
And, like a palmer bent by eld, 115
O’er moss and moor his journey held.

VI.

Heavy and dull the foot of age,
And rugged was the pilgrimage;
But none was there beside, whose care
Might such important message bear. 120
Through birchen copse he wander’d slow,
Stunted and sapless, thin and low;
By many a mountain stream he pass’d,
From the tall cliffs in tumult cast,
Dashing to foam their waters dun, 125
And sparkling in the summer sun.
Round his grey head the wild curlew
In many a fearless circle flew.
O’er chasms he pass’d, where fractures wide
Craved wary eye and ample stride; 130
He cross’d his brow beside the stone,
Where Druids erst heard victims groan,
And at the cairns upon the wild
O’er many a heathen hero piled,
He breathed a timid prayer for those 135
Who died ere Shiloh’s sun arose.
Beside Macfarlane’s Cross he staid,
There told his hours within the shade,
And at the stream his thirst allay’d.

Thence onward journeying slowly still, 140
As evening closed he reach'd the hill,
Where, rising through the woodland green,
Old Brodick's gothic towers were seen,
From Hastings, late their English lord,
Douglas had won them by the sword. 145
The sun that sunk behind the isle,
Now tinged them with a parting smile.

VII.

But though the beams of light decay,
'Twas bustle all in Brodick-Bay.
The Bruce's followers crowd the shore, 150
And boats and barges some unmoor,
Some raise the sail, some seize the oar;
Their eyes oft turn'd where glimmer'd far
What might have seem'd an early star
On heaven's blue arch, save that its light 155
Was all too flickering, fierce, and bright.
Far distant in the south, the ray
Shone pale amid retiring day,
But as, on Carrick shore,
Dim seen in outline faintly blue, 160
The shades of evening closer drew,
It kindled more and more.
The monk's slow steps now press the sands,
And now amid a scene he stands,
Full strange to churchman's eye; 165
Warriors, who, arming for the fight,
Rivet and clasp their harness light,
And twinkling spears, and axes bright,
And helmets flashing high.

Oft, too, with unaccustom'd ears, 170
A language much unmeet he hears,
While, hastening all on board,
As stormy as the swelling surge
That mix'd its roar, the leaders urge
Their followers to the ocean verge, 175
With many a haughty word.

VIII.

Through that wild throng the Father pass'd,
And reach'd the Royal Bruce at last.
He leant against a stranded boat,
That the approaching tide must float, 180
And counted every rippling wave,
As higher yet her sides they lave,
And oft the distant fire he eyed,
And closer yet his hauberk tied,
And loosen'd in its sheath his brand. 185
Edward and Lennox were at hand,
Douglas and Ronald had the care
The soldiers to the barks to share.—
The Monk approach'd and homage paid;
“And art thou come,” King Robert said, 190
“So far to bless us ere we part?”—
—“My Liege, and with a loyal heart!—
But other charge I have to tell,”—
And spoke the hest of Isabel.
—“Now by Saint Giles,” the monarch cried, 195
“This moves me much!—this morning tide,
I sent the stripling to Saint Bride,
With my commandment there to bide.”—
—“Thither he came, the portress show'd,
But there, my Liege, made brief abode.”— 200

IX.

"'Twas I," said Edward, "found employ
Of nobler import for the boy.
Deep pondering in my anxious mind,
A fitting messenger to find,
To bear thy written mandate o'er 205
To Cuthbert on the Carrick shore,
I chanced, at early dawn, to pass
The chapel gate to snatch a mass.
I found the stripling on a tomb
Low-seated, weeping for the doom 210
That gave his youth to convent gloom.
I told my purpose, and his eyes
Flash'd joyful at the glad surprise.
He bounded to the skiff, the sail
Was spread before a prosperous gale, 215
And well my charge he hath obey'd,
For, see! the ruddy signal made,
That Clifford, with his merry-men all,
Guards carelessly our father's hall."

X.

"O wild of thought, and hard of heart!" 220
Answer'd the Monarch, "on a part
Of such deep danger to employ
A mute, an orphan, and a boy!
Unfit for flight, unfit for strife,
Without a tongue to plead for life! 225
Now, were my right restored by Heaven,
Edward, my crown I would have given,
Ere, thrust on such adventure wild,
I peril'd thus the helpless child."

—Offended half, and half submiss, 230
“Brother and Liege, of blame like this,”
Edward replied, “I little dream’d.
A stranger messenger, I deem’d,
Might safest seek the beadsman’s cell,
Where all thy squires are known so well. 235
Noteless his presence, sharp his sense,
His imperfection his defence.
If seen, none can his errand guess;
If ta’en, his words no tale express—
Methinks, too, yonder beacon’s shine 240
Might expiate greater fault than mine.”—
“Rash,” said King Robert, “was the deed—
But it is done.—Embark with speed!—
Good Father, say to Isabel
How this unhappy chance befell; 245
If well we thrive on yonder shore,
Soon shall my care her page restore.
Our greeting to our sister bear,
And think of us in mass and prayer.”—

XI.

“Aye!”—said the Priest, “while this poor hand 250
Can chalice raise or cross command,
While my old voice has accents’ use,
Can Augustine forget the Bruce!”
Then to his side Lord Ronald press’d,
And whisper’d, “Bear thou this request, 255
That when by Bruce’s side I fight,
For Scotland’s crown and freedom’s right,
The princess grace her knight to bear
Some token of her favouring care;

It shall be shown where England's best 260
May shrink to see it on my crest.
And for the boy—since weightier care
For royal Bruce the times prepare,
The helpless youth is Ronald's charge,
His couch my plaid, his fence my targe." 265
He ceased; for many an eager hand
Had urged the barges from the strand.
Their number was a score and ten,
They bore thrice threescore chosen men.
With such small force did Bruce at last 270
The die for death or empire cast!

XII.

Now on the darkening main afloat,
Ready and mann'd rocks every boat;
Beneath their oars the ocean's might
Was dash'd to sparks of glimmering light. 275
Faint and more faint, as off they bore,
Their armour glanced against the shore,
And, mingled with the dashing tide,
Their murmuring voices distant died.—
“God speed them!” said the Priest, as dark 280
On distant billows glides each bark;
“O Heaven! when swords for freedom shine,
And monarch's right, the cause is thine!
Edge doubly every patriot blow!
Beat down the banners of the foe! 285
And be it to the nations known,
That Victory is from God alone!”
As up the hill his path he drew,
He turn'd his blessings to renew,

Oft turn'd, till on the darken'd coast 290
All traces of their course were lost;
Then slowly bent to Brodick tower,
To shelter for the evening hour.

XIII.

In night the fairy prospects sink,
Where Cumray's isles with verdant link 295
Close the fair entrance of the Clyde;
The woods of Bute, no more descried,
Are gone—and on the placid sea
The rowers ply their task with glee,
While hands that knightly lances bore 300
Impatient aid the labouring oar.
The half-faced moon shone dim and pale,
And glanced against the whiten'd sail;
But on that ruddy beacon-light
Each steersman kept the helm aright, 305
And oft, for such the King's command,
That all at once might reach the strand,
From boat to boat loud shout and hail
Warn'd them to crowd or slacken sail.
South and by west the armada bore, 310
And near at length the Carrick shore.
As less and less the distance grows,
High and more high the beacon rose;
The light, that seem'd a twinkling star,
Now blazed portentous, fierce, and far. 315
Dark-red the heaven above it glow'd,
Dark-red the sea beneath it flow'd,
Red rose the rocks on ocean's brim,
In blood-red light her islets swim;

Wild scream the dazzled sea-fowl gave, 320
 Dropp'd from their crags on plashing wavé.
 The deer to distant covert drew,
 The black-cock deem'd it day, and crew.
 Like some tall castle given to flame,
 O'er half the land the lustre came. 325
 "Now, good my Liege, and brother sage,
 What think ye of mine elfin page?"—
 "Row on!" the noble King replied,
 "We'll learn the truth, whate'er betide;
 Yet sure the beadsman and the child 330
 Could ne'er have waked that beacon wild."

XIV.

With that the boats approach'd the land,
 But Edward's grounded on the sand;
 The eager knight leap'd in the sea
 Waist-deep, and first on shore was he, 335
 Though every barge's hardy band
 Contended which should gain the land;
 When that strange light, which, seen afar,
 Seem'd steady as the polar star,
 Now, like a prophet's fiery chair, 340
 Seem'd travelling the realms of air.
 Wide o'er the sky the splendour glows,
 As that portentous meteor rose;
 Helm, axe, and falchion glitter'd bright,
 And in the red and dusky light 345
 His comrade's face each warrior saw,
 Nor marvell'd it was pale with awe.
 Then high in air the beams were lost,
 And darkness sunk upon the coast.—

Ronald to Heaven a prayer address'd, 350
And Douglas cross'd his dauntless breast;
"Saint James protect us!" Lennox cried,
But reckless Edward spoke aside,
"Deem'st thou, Kirkpatrick, in that flame
Red Comyn's angry spirit came, 355
Or would thy dauntless heart endure
Once more to make assurance sure?"—
"Hush!" said the Bruce; "we soon shall know,
If this be sorcerer's empty show,
Or stratagem of southern foe. 360
The moon shines out—upon the sand
Let every leader rank his band."

XV.

Faintly the moon's pale beams supply
That ruddy light's unnatural dye;
The dubious cold reflection lay 365
On the wet sands and quiet bay.
Beneath the rocks King Robert drew
His scatter'd files to order due,
Till shield compact and serried spear
In the cool light shone blue and clear. 370
Then down a path that sought the tide,
That speechless page was seen to glide;
He knelt him lowly on the sand,
And gave a scroll to Robert's hand.
"A torch," the Monarch cried, "What, ho! 375
Now shall we Cuthbert's tidings know."
But evil news the letters bare,
The Clifford's force was strong and ware,

Augmented too that very morn
 By mountaineers who came with Lorn. , 380
 Long harrow'd by oppressor's hand,
 Courage and faith had fled the land,
 And over Carrick, dark and deep,
 Had sunk dejection's iron sleep.—
 Cuthbert had seen that beacon-flame, 385
 Unwitting from what source it came.
 Doubtful of perilous event,
 Edward's mute messenger he sent,
 If Bruce deceived should venture o'er,
 To warn him from the fatal shore. 390

XVI.

As round the torch the leaders crowd,
 Bruce read these chilling news aloud.
 "What council, nobles, have we now?—
 To ambush us in greenwood bough,
 And take the chance which fate may send 395
 To bring our enterprise to end,
 Or shall we turn us to the main
 As exiles, and embark again?"—
 Answer'd fierce Edward, "Hap what may,
 In Carrick Carrick's Lord must stay. 400
 I would not minstrels told the tale,
 Wildfire or meteor made us quail."
 Answer'd the Douglas, "If my liege
 May win yon walls by storm or siege,
 Then were each brave and patriot heart 405
 Kindled of new for loyal part."—
 Answer'd Lord Ronald, "Not for shame
 Would I that aged Torquil came,

And found, for all our empty boast,
Without a blow we fled the coast. 410
I will not credit that this land,
So famed for warlike heart and hand,
The nurse of Wallace and of Bruce,
Will long with tyrants hold a truce."—
"Prove we our fate—the brunt we'll bide!" 415
So Boyd and Hays and Lennox cried;
So said, so vow'd, the leaders all;
So Bruce resolved: "And in my hall
Since the bold Southern make their home,
The hour of payment soon shall come, 420
When with a rough and rugged host
Clifford may reckon to his cost.
Meantime, through well-known bosk and dell,
I'll lead where we may shelter well."

XVII.

Now ask you whence that wondrous light, 425
Whose fairy glow beguiled their sight?—
It ne'er was known—yet grey-hair'd eld
A superstitious credence held,
That never did a mortal hand
Wake its broad glare on Carrick strand; 430
Nay, and that on the self-same night
When Bruce cross'd o'er, still gleams the light.
Yearly it gleams o'er mount and moor,
And glittering wave and crimson'd shore—
But whether beam celestial, lent 435
By Heaven to aid the King's descent,
Or fire hell-kindled from beneath,
To lure him to defeat and death,

Or were it but some meteor strange,
Of such as oft through midnight range, 440
Startling the traveller late and lone,
I know not—and it ne'er was known.

XVIII.

Now up the rocky pass they drew,
And Ronald, to his promise true,
Still made his arm the stripling's stay, 445
To aid him on the rugged way.
"Now cheer thee, simple Amadine!
Why throbs that silly heart of thine?"—
—That name the pirates to their slave
(In Gaelic 'tis the Changeling) gave— 450
"Dost thou not rest thee on my arm?
Do not my plaid-folds hold thee warm?
Hath not the wild bull's treble hide
This targe for thee and me supplied?
Is not Clan-Colla's sword of steel? 455
And, trembler, canst thou terror feel?
Cheer thee, and still that throbbing heart;
From Ronald's guard thou shalt not part."
—O! many a shaft, at random sent,
Finds mark the archer little meant! 460
And many a word, at random spoken,
May soothe or wound a heart that's broken!
Half sooth'd, half grieved, half terrified,
Close drew the page to Ronald's side;
A wild delirious thrill of joy 465
Was in that hour of agony,
As up the steepy pass he strove,
Fear, toil, and sorrow, lost in love!

XIX.

The barrier of that iron shore,
The rock's steep ledge, is now climb'd o'er; 470
And from the castle's distant wall,
From tower to tower the warders call:
The sound swings over land and sea,
And marks a watchful enemy.—
They gain'd the Chase, a wide domain 475
Left for the Castle's silvan reign,
(Seek not the scene—the axe, the plough,
The boor's dull fence, have marr'd it now,)
But then, soft swept in velvet green
The plain with many a glade between, 480
Whose tangled alleys far invade
The depth of the brown forest shade.
Here the tall fern obscured the lawn,
Fair shelter for the sportive fawn;
There, tufted close with copsewood green, 485
Was many a swelling hillock seen;
And all around was verdure meet
For pressure of the fairies' feet.
The glossy holly loved the park,
The yew-tree lent its shadow dark, 490
And many an old oak, worn and bare,
With all its shiver'd boughs, was there.
Lovely between, the moonbeams fell
On lawn and hillock, glade and dell.
The gallant Monarch sigh'd to see 495
These glades so loved in childhood free,
Bethinking that, as outlaw now,
He ranged beneath the forest bough.

XX.

Fast o'er the moonlight Chase they sped.
 Well knew the band that measured tread, 500
 When, in retreat or in advance,
 The serried warriors move at once;
 And evil were the luck, if dawn
 Descried them on the open lawn.
 Copses they traverse, brooks they cross, 505
 Strain up the bank and o'er the moss.
 From the exhausted page's brow
 Cold drops of toil are streaming now;
 With effort faint and lengthen'd pause,
 His weary step the stripling draws. 510
 "Nay, droop not yet!" the warrior said;
 "Come, let me give thee ease and aid!
 Strong are mine arms, and little care
 A weight so slight as thine to bear.—
 What! wilt thou not?—capricious boy!— 515
 Then thine own limbs and strength employ.
 Pass but this night, and pass thy care,
 I'll place thee with a lady fair,
 Where thou shalt tune thy lute to tell
 How Ronald loves fair Isabel!" 520
 Worn out, dishearten'd, and dismay'd,
 Here Amadine let go the plaid;
 His trembling limbs their aid refuse,
 He sunk among the midnight dews!

XXI.

What may be done?—the night is gone— 525
 The Bruce's band moves swiftly on—

Eternal shame, if at the brunt
 Lord Ronald grace not battle's front!—
 "See yonder oak, within whose trunk
 Decay a darken'd cell hath sunk ; 530
 Enter, and rest thee there a space,
 Wrap in my plaid thy limbs, thy face.
 I will not be, believe me, far ;
 But must not quit the ranks of war.
 Well will I mark the bosky bourne, 535
 And soon, to guard thee hence, return.—
 Nay, weep not so, thou simple boy !
 But sleep in peace, and wake in joy."
 In silvan lodging close bestow'd,
 He placed the page, and onward strode 540
 With strength put forth, o'er moss and brook,
 And soon the marching band o'ertook.

XXII.

Thus strangely left, long sobb'd and wept
 The page, till, wearied out, he slept—
 A rough voice waked his dream—"Nay, here, 545
 Here by this thicket, pass'd the deer—
 Beneath that oak old Ryno staid—
 What have we here?—a Scottish plaid,
 And in its folds a stripling laid?—
 Come forth ! thy name and business tell!— 550
 What, silent?—then I guess thee well,
 The spy that sought old Cuthbert's cell,
 Wafted from Arran yester morn—
 Come, comrades, we will straight return.
 Our Lord may choose the rack should teach 555
 To this young lurcher use of speech.

Thy bow-string, till I bind him fast."—
"Nay, but he weeps and stands aghast;
Unbound we'll lead him, fear it not;
'Tis a fair stripling, though a Scot." 560
The hunters to the castle sped,
And there the hapless captive led.

XXIII.

Stout Clifford in the castle-court
Prepared him for the morning sport;
And now with Lorn held deep discourse, 565
Now gave command for hound and horse.
War-steeds and palfreys paw'd the ground,
And many a deer-dog howl'd around.
To Amadine, Lorn's well-known word
Replying to that Southern Lord, 570
Mix'd with this clanging din, might seem
The phantasm of a fever'd dream.
The tone upon his ringing ears
Came like the sounds which fancy hears,
When in rude waves or roaring winds 575
Some words of woe the muser finds,
Until more loudly and more near,
Their speech arrests the page's ear.

XXIV.

"And was she thus," said Clifford, "lost?
The priest should rue it to his cost! 580
What says the monk?"—"The holy Sire
Owns, that in masquer's quaint attire,
She sought his skiff, disguised, unknown
To all except to him alone.

But, says the priest, a bark from Lorn 585
 Laid them aboard that very morn,
 And pirates seized her for their prey.
 He proffer'd ransom-gold to pay,
 And they agreed—but ere told o'er,
 The winds blow loud, the billows roar; 590
 They sever'd, and they met no more.
 He deems—such tempest vex'd the coast—
 Ship, crew, and fugitive, were lost.
 So let it be, with the disgrace
 And scandal of her lofty race! 595
 Thrice better she had ne'er been born,
 Than brought her infamy on Lorn!"

XXV.

Lord Clifford now the captive spied;—
 "Whom, Herbert, hast thou there?" he cried.
 "A spy we seized within the Chase, 600
 A hollow oak his lurking place."
 "What tidings can the youth afford?"—
 "He plays the mute."—"Then noose a cord —
 Unless brave Lorn reverse the doom
 For his plaid's sake."—"Clan-Colla's loom," 605
 Said Lorn, whose careless glances trace
 Rather the vesture than the face,
 "Clan-Colla's dames such tartans twine;
 Wearer nor plaid claims care of mine.
 Give him, if my advice you crave, 610
 His own scathed oak; and let him wave
 In air, unless, by terror wrung,
 A frank confession find his tongue.—

Nor shall he die without his rite ;
—Thou, Angus Roy, attend the sight, 615
And give Clan-Colla's dirge thy breath,
As they convey him to his death."—
"O brother ! cruel to the last !"
Through the poor captive's bosom pass'd
The thought, but, to his purpose true, 620
He said not, though he sigh'd, "Adieu !"

XXVI.

And will he keep his purpose still
In sight of that last closing ill,
When one poor breath, one single word,
May freedom, safety, life, afford ? 625
Can he resist the instinctive call,
For life that bids us barter all?—
Love, strong as death, his heart hath steel'd,
His nerves hath strung—he will not yield !
Since that poor breath, that little word, 630
May yield Lord Ronald to the sword.—
Clan-Colla's dirge is pealing wide,
The griesly headsman's by his side ;
Along the greenwood Chase they bend,
And now their march has ghastly end, 635
That old and shatter'd oak beneath,
They destine for the place of death.
—What thoughts are his, while all in vain
His eye for aid explores the plain ?
What thoughts, while, with a dizzy ear, 640
He hears the death-prayer mutter'd near ?
And must he die such death accurst,
Or will that bosom-secret burst ?

Cold on his brow breaks terror's dew,
His trembling lips are livid blue; 645
The agony of parting life
Has nought to match that moment's strife!

XXVII.

But other witnesses are nigh,
Who mock at fear, and death defy!
Soon as the dire lament was play'd, 650
It waked the lurking ambuscade.
The Island Lord look'd forth, and spied
The cause, and loud in fury cried,
"By Heaven! they lead the page to die,
And mock me in his agony! 655
They shall abye it!"—On his arm
Bruce laid strong grasp, "They shall not harm
A ringlet of the stripling's hair;
But, till I give the word, forbear.
—Douglas, lead fifty of our force 660
Up yonder hollow water-course,
And couch thee midway on the wold,
Between the flyers and their hold:
A spear above the copse display'd,
Be signal of the ambush made. 665
—Edward, with forty spearmen, straight
Through yonder copse approach the gate,
And, when thou hear'st the battle-din,
Rush forward, and the passage win,
Secure the drawbridge—storm the port, 670
And man and guard the castle-court.—
The rest move slowly forth with me,
In shelter of the forest-tree,
'Till Douglas at his post I see."

XXVIII.

Like war-horse eager to rush on, 675
 Compell'd to wait the signal blown,
 Hid, and scarce hid, by greenwood bough,
 Trembling with rage, stands Ronald now,
 And in his grasp his sword gleams blue,
 Soon to be dyed with deadlier hue.— 680
 Meanwhile the Bruce, with steady eye,
 Sees the dark death-train moving by,
 And heedful measures oft the space,
 The Douglas and his band must trace,
 Ere they can reach their destined ground. 685
 Now sinks the dirge's wailing sound,
 Now cluster round the direful tree
 That slow and solemn company,
 While hymn mistuned and mutter'd prayer
 The victim for his fate prepare.— 690
 What glances o'er the greenwood shade?
 The spear that marks the ambuscade!—
 "Now, noble Chief! I leave thee loose;
 Upon them, Ronald!" said the Bruce.

XXIX.

"The Bruce, the Bruce!" to well-known cry 695
 His native rocks and woods reply.
 "The Bruce, the Bruce!" in that dread word
 The knell of hundred deaths was heard.
 The astonish'd Southern gazed at first,
 Where the wild tempest was to burst, 700
 That waked in that presaging name.
 Before, behind, around it came!
 Half-arm'd, surprised, on every side
 Hemm'd in, hew'd down, they bled and died.

Deep in the ring the Bruce engaged, 705
And fierce Clan-Colla's broadsword raged!
Full soon the few who fought were sped,
Nor better was their lot who fled,
And met, 'mid terror's wild career,
The Douglas's redoubted spear! 710
Two hundred yeomen on that morn
The castle left, and none return.

XXX.

Not on their flight press'd Ronald's brand,
A gentler duty claim'd his hand.
He raised the page, where on the plain 715
His fear had sunk him with the slain:
And twice, that morn, surprise well near
Betray'd the secret kept by fear;
Once, when, with life returning, came
To the boy's lip Lord Ronald's name, 720
And hardly recollection drown'd
The accents in a murmuring sound;
And once, when scarce he could resist
The Chieftain's care to loose the vest,
Drawn tightly o'er his labouring breast. 725
But then the Bruce's bugle blew,
For martial work was yet to do.

XXXI.

A harder task fierce Edward waits.
Ere signal given, the castle gates
His fury had assail'd; 730
Such was his wonted reckless mood,
Yet desperate valour oft made good,

Even by its daring, venture rude,
 Where prudence might have fail'd.
 Upon the bridge his strength he threw, ' 735
 And struck the iron chain in two,
 By which its planks arose;
 The warder next his axe's edge
 Struck down upon the threshold ledge,
 'Twixt door and post a ghastly wedge! 740
 The gate they may not close.
 Well fought the Southern in the fray,
 Clifford and Lorn fought well that day,
 But stubborn Edward forced his way
 Against a hundred foes. 745
 Loud came the cry, "The Bruce, the Bruce!"
 No hope or in defence or truce,
 Fresh combatants pour in;
 Mad with success, and drunk with gore,
 They drive the struggling foe before, 750
 And ward on ward they win.
 Unsparing was the vengeful sword,
 And limbs were lopp'd and life-blood pour'd,
 The cry of death and conflict roar'd,
 And fearful was the din! 755
 The startling horses plunged and flung,
 Clamour'd the dogs till turrets rung,
 Nor sunk the fearful cry,
 Till not a foeman was there found
 Alive, save those who on the ground 760
 Groan'd in their agony!

XXXII.

The valiant Clifford is no more;
 On Ronald's broadsword stream'd his gore.

But better hap had he of Lorn,
 Who, by the foemen backward borne, 765
 Yet gain'd with slender train the port,
 Where lay his bark beneath the fort,
 And cut the cable loose.
 Short were his shrift in that debate,
 That hour of fury and of fate, 770
 If Lorn encounter'd Bruce!
 Then long and loud the victor shout
 From turret and from tower rung out,
 The rugged vaults replied;
 And from the donjon tower on high, 775
 The men of Carrick may descry
 Saint Andrew's cross, in blazonry
 Of silver, waving wide!

XXXIII.

The Bruce hath won his father's hall!
 —"Welcome, brave friends and comrades all, 780
 Welcome to mirth and joy!
 The first, the last, is welcome here,
 From lord and chieftain, prince and peer,
 To this poor speechless boy.
 Great God! once more my sire's abode 785
 Is mine—behold the floor I trode
 In tottering infancy!
 And there the vaulted arch, whose sound
 Echoed my joyous shout and bound
 In boyhood, and that rung around 790
 To youth's unthinking glee!
 O first, to thee, all-gracious Heaven,
 Then to my friends, my thanks be given!"—

He paused a space, his brow he cross'd—
 Then on the board his sword he toss'd, 795
 Yet steaming hot; with Southern gore
 From hilt to point 'twas crimson'd o'er.

XXXIV.

“Bring here,” he said, “the mazers four,
 My noble fathers loved of yore.
 Thrice let them circle round the board, 800
 The pledge, fair Scotland's rights restored!
 And he whose lip shall touch the wine,
 Without a vow as true as mine,
 To hold both lands and life at nought,
 Until her freedom shall be bought,— 805
 Be brand of a disloyal Scot,
 And lasting infamy his lot!
 Sit, gentle friends! our hour of glee
 Is brief, we'll spend it joyously!
 Blithest of all the sun's bright beams, 810
 When betwixt storm and storm he gleams.
 Well is our country's work begun,
 But more, far more, must yet be done:
 Speed messengers the country through;
 Arouse old friends, and gather new; 815
 Warn Lanark's knights to gird their mail,
 Rouse the brave sons of Teviotdale,
 Let Ettrick's archers sharp their darts,
 The fairest forms, the truest hearts!
 Call all, call all! from Reedswair-Path, 820
 To the wild confines of Cape-Wrath;
 Wide let the news through Scotland ring,
 The Northern Eagle claps his wing!”

CANTO SIXTH.

O WHO, that shared them, ever shall forget
The emotions of the spirit-rousing time,
When breathless in the mart the couriers met,
Early and late, at evening and at prime;
When the loud cannon and the merry chime 5
Hail'd news on news, as field on field was won,
When Hope, long doubtful, soar'd at length sublime,
And our glad eyes, awake as day begun,
Watch'd Joy's broad banner rise, to meet the rising sun!

O these were hours, when thrilling joy repaid 10
A long, long course of darkness, doubts, and fears!
The heart-sick faintness of the hope delay'd,
The waste, the woe, the bloodshed, and the tears,
That track'd with terror twenty rolling years,
All was forgot in that blithe jubilee! 15
Her downcast eye even pale Affliction rears,
To sigh a thankful prayer, amid the glee,
That hail'd the Despot's fall, and peace and liberty!

Such news o'er Scotland's hills triumphant rode,
When 'gainst the invaders turn'd the battle's scale, 20
When Bruce's banner had victorious flow'd
O'er Loudoun's mountain, and in Ury's vale;
When English blood oft deluged Douglas-dale,
And fiery Edward routed stout St John,
When Randolph's warcry swell'd the southern gale, 25
And many a fortress, town, and tower, was won,
And Fame still sounded forth fresh deeds of glory done.

II.

Blithe tidings flew from baron's tower
 To peasant's cot, to forest-bower,
 And waked the solitary cell, 30
 Where lone Saint Bride's recluses dwell.
 Princess no more, fair Isabel,

A vot'ress of the order now,
 Say, did the rule that bid thee wear
 Dim veil and woollen scapulare, 35
 And reft thy locks of dark-brown hair,

That stern and rigid vow,
 Did it condemn the transport high,
 Which glisten'd in thy watery eye,
 When minstrel or when palmer told 40

Each fresh exploit of Bruce the bold?—
 And whose the lovely form, that shares
 Thy anxious hopes, thy fears, thy prayers?
 No sister she of convent shade;

So say these locks in lengthen'd braid, 45
 So say the blushes and the sighs,

The tremors that unbidden rise,
 When, mingled with the Bruce's fame,
 The brave Lord Ronald's praises came.

III.

Believe, his father's castle won, 50

And his bold enterprise begun,
 That Bruce's earliest cares restore
 The speechless page to Arran's shore:
 Nor think that long the quaint disguise
 Conceal'd her from a sister's eyes; 55

And sister-like in love they dwell
 In that lone convent's silent cell.
 There Bruce's slow assent allows
 Fair Isabel the veil and vows ;
 And there, her sex's dress regain'd, 60
 The lovely Maid of Lorn remain'd,
 Unnamed, unknown, while Scotland far
 Resounded with the din of war ;
 And many a month, and many a day,
 In calm seclusion wore away. 65

IV.

These days, these months, to years had worn,
 When tidings of high weight were borne
 To that lone island's shore ;
 Of all the Scottish conquests made
 By the first Edward's ruthless blade, 70
 His son retain'd no more,
 Northward of Tweed, but Stirling's towers,
 Beleaguer'd by King Robert's powers ;
 And they took term of truce,
 If England's King should not relieve 75
 The siege ere John the Baptist's eve,
 To yield them to the Bruce.
 England was roused—on every side
 Courier and post and herald hied,
 To summon prince and peer, 80
 At Berwick-bounds to meet their Liege,
 Prepared to raise fair Stirling's siege,
 With buckler, brand, and spear.
 The term was nigh—they muster'd fast,
 By beacon and by bugle-blast 85
 Forth marshall'd for the field ;

There rode each knight of noble name,
 There England's hardy archers came,
 The land they trode seem'd all on flame,

With banner, blade, and shield!

90

And not famed England's powers alone,
 Renown'd in arms, the summons own;

For Neustria's knights obey'd,

Gascogne hath lent her horsemen good,

And Cambria, but of late subdued,

95

Sent forth her mountain-multitude,

And Connoght pour'd from waste and wood

Her hundred tribes, whose sceptre rude

Dark Eth O'Connor sway'd.

V.

Right to devoted Caledon

100

The storm of war rolls slowly on,

With menace deep and dread;

So the dark clouds, with gathering power,

Suspend awhile the threaten'd shower,

Till every peak and summit lower

105

Round the pale pilgrim's head.

Not with such pilgrim's startled eye

King Robert mark'd the tempest nigh!

Resolved the brunt to bide,

His royal summons warn'd the land,

110

That all who own'd their King's command

Should instant take the spear and brand,

To combat at his side.

O who may tell the sons of fame,

That at King Robert's bidding came,

115

To battle for the right!

From Cheviot to the shores of Ross,
 From Solway-Sands to Marshal's-Moss,
 All boun'd them for the fight.
 Such news the royal courier tells, 120
 Who came to rouse dark Arran's dells;
 But farther tidings must the ear
 Of Isabel in secret hear.
 These in her cloister walk, next morn,
 Thus shared she with the Maid of Lorn. 125

VI.

"My Edith, can I tell how dear
 Our intercourse of hearts sincere
 Hath been to Isabel?—
 Judge then the sorrow of my heart,
 When I must say the words, We part! 130
 The cheerless convent-cell
 Was not, sweet maiden, made for thee;
 Go thou where thy vocation free
 On happier fortunes fell.
 Nor, Edith, judge thyself betray'd, 135
 Though Robert knows that Lorn's high Maid
 And his poor silent page were one.
 Versed in the fickle heart of man,
 Earnest and anxious hath he look'd
 How Ronald's heart the message brook'd 140
 That gave him, with her last farewell,
 The charge of Sister Isabel,
 To think upon thy better right,
 And keep the faith his promise plight.
 Forgive him for thy sister's sake, 145
 At first if vain repinings wake—
 Long since that mood is gone:

Now dwells he on thy juster claims,
 And oft his breach of faith he blames—
 Forgive him for thine own!"—

150

VII.

"No! never to Lord Ronald's bower
 Will I again as paramour"——

"Nay, hush thee, too impatient maid,
 Until my final tale be said!—

The good King Robert would engage

155

Edith once more his elfin page,

By her own heart, and her own eye,

Her lover's penitence to try—

Safe in his royal charge, and free,

Should such thy final purpose be,

160

Again unknown to seek the cell,

And live and die with Isabel."

Thus spoke the maid—King Robert's eye

Might have some glance of policy;

Dunstaffnage had the monarch ta'en,

165

And Lorn had own'd King Robert's reign;

Her brother had to England fled,

And there in banishment was dead;

Ample, through exile, death, and flight,

O'er tower and land was Edith's right;

170

This ample right o'er tower and land

Were safe in Ronald's faithful hand.

VIII.

Embarrass'd eye and blushing cheek

Pleasure and shame, and fear bespeak!

Yet much the reasoning Edith made:

175

"Her sister's faith she must upbraid,

Who gave such secret, dark and dear,
In council to another's ear.
Why should she leave the peaceful cell?—
How should she part with Isabel?— 180
How wear that strange attire agen?—
How risk herself 'midst martial men?—
And how be guarded on the way?—
At least she might entreat delay."
Kind Isabel, with secret smile, 185
Saw and forgave the maiden's wile,
Reluctant to be thought to move
At the first call of truant love.

IX.

Oh, blame her not!—when zephyrs wake,
The aspen's trembling leaves must shake; 190
When beams the sun through April's shower,
It needs must bloom, the violet flower;
And Love, howe'er the maiden strive,
Must with reviving hope revive!
A thousand soft excuses came, 195
To plead his cause 'gainst virgin shame.
Pledged by their sires in earliest youth,
He had her plighted faith and truth—
Then, 'twas her Liege's strict command,
And she, beneath his royal hand, 200
A ward in person and in land:—
And, last, she was resolved to stay
Only brief space—one little day—
Close hidden in her safe disguise
From all, but most from Ronald's eyes— 205
But once to see him more!—nor blame
Her wish—to hear him name her name!—

Then, to bear back to solitude
The thought, he had his falsehood rued !
But Isabel, who long had seen 210
Her pallid cheek and pensive mien,
And well herself the cause might know,
Though innocent, of Edith's woe,
Joy'd, generous, that revolving time
Gave means to expiate the crime. 215
High glow'd her bosom as she said,
"Well shall her sufferings be repaid !"
Now came the parting hour—a band
From Arran's mountains left the land ;
Their chief, Fitz-Louis, had the care 220
The speechless Amadine to bear
To Bruce, with honour, as behoved
To page the monarch dearly loved.

X.

The King had deem'd the maiden bright
Should reach him long before the fight, 225
But storms and fate her course delay :
It was on eve of battle-day,
When o'er the Gillie's-hill she rode.
The landscape like a furnace glow'd,
And far as e'er the eye was borne, 230
The lances waved like autumn-corn.
In battles four beneath their eye,
The forces of King Robert lie.
And one below the hill was laid,
Reserved for rescue and for aid ; 235
And three, advanced, form'd vaward-line,
'Twixt Bannock's brook and Ninian's shrine.

Detach'd was each, yet each so nigh
As well might mutual aid supply.
Beyond, the Southern host appears, 240
A boundless wilderness of spears,
Whose verge or rear the anxious eye
Strove far, but strove in vain, to spy.
Thick flashing in the evening beam,
Glaives, lances, bills, and banners gleam; 245
And where the heaven join'd with the hill,
Was distant armour flashing still,
So wide, so far, the boundless host
Seem'd in the blue horizon lost.

XI.

Down from the hill the maiden pass'd, 250
At the wild show of war aghast;
And traversed first the rearward host,
Reserved for aid where needed most.
The men of Carrick and of Ayr,
Lennox and Lanark too, were there, 255
And all the western land;
With these the valiant of the Isles
Beneath their chieftains rank'd their files,
In many a plaided band.
There, in the centre, proudly raised, 260
The Bruce's royal standard blazed,
And there Lord Ronald's banner bore
A galley driven by sail and oar.
A wild, yet pleasing contrast, made
Warriors in mail and plate array'd, 265
With the plumed bonnet and the plaid
By these Hebrideans worn;

But O! unseen for three long years,
 Dear was the garb of mountaineers
 To the fair maid of Lorn! 270
 For one she look'd—but he was far
 Busied amid the ranks of war—
 Yet with affection's troubled eye
 She mark'd his banner boldly fly,
 Gave on the countless foe a glance, 275
 And thought on battle's desperate chance.

XII.

To centre of the vaward line
 Fitz-Louis guided Amadine.
 Arm'd all on foot, that host appears
 A serried mass of glimmering spears. 280
 There stood the Marchers' warlike band,
 The warriors there of Lodon's land;
 Ettrick and Liddell bent the yew,
 A band of archers fierce, though few;
 The men of Nith and Annan's vale, 285
 And the bold Spears of Teviotdale;—
 The dauntless Douglas these obey,
 And the young Stuart's gentle sway.
 North-eastward by Saint Ninian's shrine,
 Beneath fierce Randolph's charge, combine 290
 The warriors whom the hardy North
 From Tay to Sutherland sent forth.
 The rest of Scotland's war-array
 With Edward Bruce to westward lay,
 Where Bannock, with his broken bank 295
 And deep ravine, protects their flank.
 Behind them, screen'd by sheltering wood,
 The gallant Keith, Lord Marshal, stood:

His men-at-arms bear mace and lance,
And plumes that wave, and helmets that glance. 300
Thus fair divided by the King,
Centre, and right, and left-ward wing,
Composed his front ; nor distant far
Was strong reserve to aid the war.
And 'twas to front of this array, 305
Her guide and Edith made their way.

XIII.

Here must they pause ; for, in advance
As far as one might pitch a lance,
The Monarch rode along the van,
The foe's approaching force to scan, 310
His line to marshal and to range,
And ranks to square, and fronts to change.
Alone he rode—from head to heel
Sheathed in his ready arms of steel ;
Nor mounted yet on war-horse wight, 315
But, till more near the shock of fight,
Reining a palfrey low and light.
A diadem of gold was set
Above his bright steel basinet,
And clasp'd within its glittering twine 320
Was seen the glove of Argentine ;
Truncheon or leading staff he lacks,
Bearing instead a battle-axe.
He ranged his soldiers for the fight,
Accoutred thus, in open sight 325
Of either host.—Three bowshots far,
Paused the deep front of England's war,

And rested on their arms awhile,
 To close and rank their warlike file,
 And hold high council, if that night
 Should view the strife, or dawning light. 330

XIV.

O gay, yet fearful to behold,
 Flashing with steel and rough with gold,
 And bristled o'er with bills and spears,
 With plumes and pennons waving fair, 335
 Was that bright battle-front! for there
 Rode England's King and peers:
 And who, that saw that monarch ride,
 His kingdom battled by his side,
 Could then his direful doom foretell!— 340
 Fair was his seat in knightly selle,
 And in his sprightly eye was set
 Some spark of the Plantagenet.
 Though light and wandering was his glance,
 It flash'd at sight of shield and lance. 345
 "Know'st thou," he said, "De Argentine,
 Yon knight who marshals thus their line?"—
 "The tokens on his helmet tell
 The Bruce, my Liege: I know him well."—
 "And shall the audacious traitor brave 350
 The presence where our banners wave?"—
 "So please my Liege," said Argentine,
 "Were he but horsed on steed like mine,
 To give him fair and knightly chance,
 I would adventure forth my lance."— 355
 "In battle-day," the King replied,
 "Nice tourney rules are set aside.

—Still must the rebel dare our wrath?
 Set on him—sweep him from our path!”
 And, at King Edward’s signal, soon 360
 Dash’d from the ranks Sir Henry Boune.

XV.

Of Hereford’s high blood he came,
 A race renown’d for knightly fame.
 He burn’d before his Monarch’s eye
 To do some deed of chivalry. 365
 He spurr’d his steed, he couch’d his lance,
 And darted on the Bruce at once.
 —As motionless as rocks, that bide
 The wrath of the advancing tide,
 The Bruce stood fast.—Each breast beat high, 370
 And dazzled was each gazing eye—
 The heart had hardly time to think,
 The eyelid scarce had time to wink,
 While on the King, like flash of flame,
 Spurr’d to full speed the war-horse came! 375
 The partridge may the falcon mock,
 If that slight palfrey stand the shock—
 But, swerving from the Knight’s career,
 Just as they met, Bruce shunn’d the spear.
 Onward the baffled warrior bore 380
 His course—but soon his course was o’er!—
 High in his stirrups stood the King,
 And gave his battle-axe the swing.
 Right on De Boune, the whiles he pass’d,
 Fell that stern dint—the first—the last!— 385
 Such strength upon the blow was put,
 The helmet crash’d like hazel-nut;

The axe-shaft, with its brazen clasp,
 Was shiver'd to the gauntlet grasp.
 Springs from the blow the startled horse, 390
 Drops to the plain the lifeless corse;
 —First of that fatal field, how soon,
 How sudden, fell the fierce De Boune!

XVI.

One pitying glance the Monarch sped,
 Where on the field his foe lay dead; 395
 Then gently turn'd his palfrey's head,
 And, pacing back his sober way,
 Slowly he gain'd his own array.
 There round their King the leaders crowd,
 And blame his recklessness aloud, 400
 That risk'd 'gainst each adventurous spear
 A life so valued and so dear.
 His broken weapon's shaft survey'd
 The King, and careless answer made,—
 "My loss may pay my folly's tax; 405
 I've broke my trusty battle-axe."
 'Twas then Fitz-Louis, bending low,
 Did Isabel's commission show;
 Edith, disguised, at distance stands,
 And hides her blushes with her hands. 410
 The monarch's brow has changed its hue,
 Away the gory axe he threw,
 While to the seeming page he drew,
 Clearing war's terrors from his eye.
 Her hand with gentle ease he took, 415
 With such a kind protecting look,
 As to a weak and timid boy

Might speak, that elder brother's care
And elder brother's love were there.

XVII.

"Fear not," he said, "young Amadine!" 420
Then whisper'd, "Still that name be thine.
Fate plays her wonted fantasy,
Kind Amadine, with thee and me,
And sends thee here in doubtful hour.
But soon we are beyond her power;" 425
For on this chosen battle-plain,
Victor or vanquish'd, I remain.
Do thou to yonder hill repair;
The followers of our host are there,
And all who may not weapons bear.— 430
Fitz-Louis, have him in thy care.—
Joyful we meet, if all go well;
If not, in Arran's holy cell
Thou must take part with Isabel;
For brave Lord Ronald, too, hath sworn, 435
Not to regain the Maid of Lorn,
(The bliss on earth he covets most,)
Would he forsake his battle-post,
Or shun the fortune that may fall
To Bruce, to Scotland, and to all.— 440
But, hark! some news these trumpets tell;
Forgive my haste—farewell—farewell."—
And in a lower voice he said,
"Be of good cheer—farewell, sweet maid!"—

XVIII.

"What train of dust, with trumpet-sound 445
 And glimmering spears, is wheeling round
 Our leftward flank?"—the Monarch cried,
 To Moray's Earl who rode beside.
 "Lo! round thy station pass the foes!
 Randolph, thy wreath has lost a rose." 450
 The Earl his visor closed, and said,
 "My wreath shall bloom, or life shall fade.—
 Follow, my household!"—And they go
 Like lightning on the advancing foe.
 "My Liege," said noble Douglas then, 455
 "Earl Randolph has but one to ten:
 Let me go forth his band to aid!"—
 —"Stir not. The error he hath made,
 Let him amend it as he may;
 I will not weaken mine array." 460
 Then loudly rose the conflict-cry,
 And Douglas's brave heart swell'd high,—
 "My Liege," he said, "with patient ear
 I must not Moray's death-knell hear!"—
 "Then go—but speed thee back again."— 465
 Forth sprung the Douglas with his train:
 But, when they won a rising hill,
 He bade his followers hold them still.—
 "See, see! the routed Southern fly!
 The Earl hath won the victory." 470
 Lo! where yon steeds run masterless,
 His banner towers above the press.
 Rein up; our presence would impair
 The fame we come too late to share."

Back to the host the Douglas rode, 475
And soon glad tidings are abroad,
That, Dayncourt by stout Randolph slain,
His followers fled with loosen'd rein.—
That skirmish closed the busy day,
And couch'd in battle's prompt array, 480
Each army on their weapons lay.

XIX.

It was a night of lovely June,
High rode in cloudless blue the moon,
Demayet smiled beneath her ray;
Old Stirling's towers arose in light, 485
And, twined in links of silver bright,
Her winding river lay.
Ah, gentle planet! other sight
Shall greet thee, next returning night,
Of broken arms and banners tore, 490
And marshes dark with human gore,
And piles of slaughter'd men and horse,
And Forth that floats the frequent corse,
And many a wounded wretch to plain
Beneath thy silver light in vain! 495
But now, from England's host, the cry
Thou hear'st of wassail revelry,
While from the Scottish legions pass
The murmur'd prayer, the early mass!—
Here, numbers had presumption given; 500
There, bands o'er-match'd sought aid from Heaven.

XX.

On Gillie's-hill, whose height commands'
 The battle-field, fair Edith stands,
 With serf and page unfit for war,
 To eye the conflict from afar. 505
 O! with what doubtful agony
 She sees the dawning tint the sky!—
 Now on the Ochils gleams the sun,
 And glistens now Demayet dun;
 Is it the lark that carols shrill, 510
 Is it the bittern's early hum?
 No!—distant, but increasing still,
 The trumpet's sound swells up the hill,
 With the deep murmur of the drum.
 Responsive from the Scottish host, 515
 Pipe-clang and bugle-sound were toss'd,
 His breast and brow each soldier cross'd,
 And started from the ground;
 Arm'd and array'd for instant fight,
 Rose archer, spearman, squire and knight, 520
 And in the pomp of battle bright
 The dread battalia frown'd.

XXI.

Now onward, and in open view,
 The countless ranks of England drew,
 Dark rolling like the ocean-tide, 525
 When the rough west hath chafed his pride,
 And his deep roar sends challenge wide
 To all that bars his way!

In front the gallant archers trode,
The men-at-arms behind them rode, 530
And midmost of the phalanx broad

The Monarch held his sway.

Beside him many a war-horse fumes,
Around him waves a sea of plumes,
Where many a knight in battle known, 535
And some who spurs had first braced on,
And deem'd that fight should see them won,

King Edward's hests obey.

De Argentine attends his side,
With stout De Valence, Pembroke's pride, 540
Selected champions from the train,
To wait upon his bridle-rein.

Upon the Scottish foe he gazed—
—At once, before his sight amazed,
Sunk banner, spear, and shield; 545
Each weapon-point is downward sent,
Each warrior to the ground is bent.

"The rebels, Argentine, repent!

For pardon they have kneel'd."—

"Aye!—but they bend to other powers, 550
And other pardon sue than ours!

See where yon bare-foot Abbot stands,
And blesses them with lifted hands!
Upon the spot where they have kneel'd,
These men will die, or win the field."— 555

—"Then prove we if they die or win!
Bid Gloster's Earl the fight begin."

XXII.

Earl Gilbert waved his truncheon high,
Just as the Northern ranks arose,
Signal for England's archery 560
To halt and bend their bows.
Then stepp'd each yeoman forth a pace,
Glanced at the intervening space,
And raised his left hand high;
To the right ear the cords they bring— 565
—At once ten thousand bow-strings ring,
Ten thousand arrows fly!
Nor paused on the devoted Scot
The ceaseless fury of their shot;
As fiercely and as fast, 570
Forth whistling came the grey-goose wing
As the wild hailstones pelt and ring
Adown December's blast.
Nor mountain targe of tough bull-hide,
Nor lowland mail that storm may bide; 575
Woe, woe to Scotland's banner'd pride,
If the fell shower may last!
Upon the right, behind the wood,
Each by his steed dismounted, stood
The Scottish chivalry;— 580
—With foot in stirrup, hand on mane,
Fierce Edward Bruce can scarce restrain
His own keen heart, his eager train,
Until the archers gain'd the plain;
Then, "Mount, ye gallants free!" 585
He cried; and, vaulting from the ground,
His saddle every horseman found.

On high their glittering crests they toss,
As springs the wild-fire from the moss ;
The shield hangs down on every breast, 590
Each ready lance is in the rest,

And loud shouts Edward Bruce,—
“Forth, Marshal, on the peasant foe !
We’ll tame the terrors of their bow,
And cut the bow-string loose !” 595

XXIII.

Then spurs were dash’d in chargers’ flanks,
They rush’d among the archer ranks.
No spears were there the shock to let,
No stakes to turn the charge were set,
And how shall yeoman’s armour slight 600
Stand the long lance and mace of might ?

Or what may their short swords avail,
’Gainst barbed horse and shirt of mail ?
Amid their ranks the chargers sprung,
High o’er their heads the weapons swung, 605
And shriek and groan and vengeful shout
Give note of triumph and of rout !

Awhile, with stubborn hardihood,
Their English hearts the strife made good ;
Borne down at length on every side, 610
Compell’d to flight they scatter wide.—

Let stags of Sherwood leap for glee,
And bound the deer of Dallom-Lee !
The broken bows of Bannock’s shore
Shall in the greenwood ring no more ! 615
Round Wakefield’s merry may-pole now,
The maids may twine the summer bough,

May northward look with longing glance,
For those that wont to lead the dance,
For the blithe archers look in vain ! 620
Broken, dispersed, in flight o'erta'en,
Pierced through, trod down, by thousands slain,
They cumber Bannock's bloody plain.

XXIV.

The King with scorn beheld their flight.
"Are these," he said, "our yeomen wight? 625
Each braggart churl could boast before,
Twelve Scottish lives his baldric bore!
Fitter to plunder chase or park,
Than make a manly foe their mark.—
Forward, each gentleman and knight ! 630
Let gentle blood show generous might,
And chivalry redeem the fight!"
To rightward of the wild affray,
The field show'd fair and level way ;
But, in mid-space, the Bruce's care 635
Had bored the ground with many a pit,
With turf and brushwood hidden yet,
That form'd a ghastly snare.
Rushing, ten thousand horsemen came,
With spears in rest, and hearts on flame, 640
That panted for the shock !
With blazing crests and banners spread,
And trumpet-clang and clamour dread,
The wide plain thunder'd to their tread,
As far as Stirling rock. 645
Down ! down ! in headlong overthrow,
Horseman and horse, the foremost go,
Wild floundering on the field !

The first are in destruction's gorge,
 Their followers wildly o'er them urge;— 650
 The knightly helm and shield,
 The mail, the acton, and the spear,
 Strong hand, high heart, are useless here!
 Loud from the mass confused the cry
 Of dying warriors swells on high, 655
 And steeds that shriek in agony!
 They came like mountain-torrent red,
 That thunders o'er its rocky bed;
 They broke like that same torrent's wave,
 When swallow'd by a darksome cave. 660
 Billows on billows burst and boil,
 Maintaining still the stern turmoil,
 And to their wild and tortured groan
 Each adds new terrors of his own!

XXV.

Too strong in courage and in might 665
 Was England yet to yield the fight.
 Her noblest all are here;
 Names that to fear were never known,
 Bold Norfolk's Earl De Brotherton,
 And Oxford's famed De Vere. 670
 There Gloster plied the bloody sword,
 And Berkley, Grey, and Hereford,
 Bottetourt and Sanzavere,
 Ross, Montague, and Mauley came,
 And Courtenay's pride, and Percy's fame— 675
 Names known too well in Scotland's war,
 At Falkirk, Methven, and Dunbar,

Blazed broader yet in after years,
At Cressy red and fell Poitiers.
Pembroke with these, and Argentine, 680
Brought up the rearward battle-line.
With caution o'er the ground they tread,
Slippery with blood and piled with dead,
Till hand to hand in battle set,
The bills with spears and axes met, 685
And, closing dark on every side,
Raged the full contest far and wide.
Then was the strength of Douglas tried,
Then proved was Randolph's generous pride,
And, well did Stewart's actions grace 690
The sire of Scotland's royal race!
Firmly they kept their ground;
As firmly England onward press'd,
And down went many a noble crest,
And rent was many a valiant breast, 695
And Slaughter revell'd round.

XXVI.

Unflinching foot 'gainst foot was set,
Unceasing blow by blow was met;
The groans of those who fell
Were drown'd amid the shriller clang, 700
That from the blades and harness rang,
And in the battle-yell.
Yet fast they fell, unheard, forgot,
Both Southern fierce and hardy Scot;
And O! amid that waste of life, 705
What various motives fired the strife!

The aspiring Noble bled for fame,
 The Patriot for his country's claim ;
 This Knight his youthful strength to prove,
 And that to win his lady's love ; 710
 Some fought from ruffian thirst of blood,
 From habit some, or hardihood.
 But ruffian stern, and soldier good,
 The noble and the slave,
 From various cause the same wild road, 715
 On the same bloody morning trode,
 To that dark inn, the Grave !

XXVII.

The tug of strife to flag begins,
 Though neither loses yet nor wins.
 High rides the sun, thick rolls the dust, 720
 And feebler speeds the blow and thrust.
 Douglas leans on his war-sword now,
 And Randolph wipes his bloody brow ;
 Nor less had toil'd each Southern knight,
 From morn till mid-day in the fight. 725
 Strong Egremont for air must gasp,
 Beauchamp undoes his visor-clasp,
 And Montague must quit his spear,
 And sinks thy falchion, bold De Vere !
 The blows of Berkley fall less fast, 730
 And gallant Pembroke's bugle-blast
 Hath lost its lively tone ;
 Sinks, Argentine, thy battle-word,
 And Percy's shout was fainter heard,
 " My merry-men, fight on ! " 735

XXVIII.

Bruce, with the pilot's wary eye,
The slackening of the storm could spy.

“One effort more, and Scotland's free!

Lord of the Isles, my trust in thee

Is firm as Ailsa Rock;

740

Rush on with Highland sword and targe,

I, with my Carrick spearmen, charge;

Now, forward to the shock!”

At once the spears were forward thrown,

Against the sun the broadswords shone;

745

The pibroch lent its maddening tone,

And loud King Robert's voice was known—

“Carrick, press on—they fail, they fail!

Press on, brave sons of Innisgail,

The foe is fainting fast!”

750

Each strike for parent, child, and wife,

For Scotland, liberty, and life,—

The battle cannot last!”

XXIX.

The fresh and desperate onset bore

The foes three furlongs back and more,

755

Leaving their noblest in their gore.

Alone, De Argentine

Yet bears on high his red-cross shield,

Gathers the relics of the field,

Renews the ranks where they have reel'd,

760

And still makes good the line.

Brief strife, but fierce, his efforts raise,

A bright but momentary blaze.

Fair Edith heard the Southern shout,

Beheld them turning from the rout,

765

Heard the wild call their trumpets sent,
 In notes 'twixt triumph and lament.
 That rallying force, combined anew,
 Appear'd in her distracted view,

To hem the Islesmen round ;

770

"O God ! the combat they renew,
 And is no rescue found !

And ye that look thus tamely on,
 And see your native land o'erthrown,
 O ! are your hearts of flesh or stone ?"

775

XXX.

The multitudes that watch'd afar,
 Rejected from the ranks of war,
 Had not unmoved beheld the fight,
 When strove the Bruce for Scotland's right ;
 Each heart had caught the patriot spark,
 Old man and stripling, priest and clerk,
 Bondsman and serf ; even female hand
 Stretch'd to the hatchet or the brand ;

780

But, when mute Amadine they heard

Give to their zeal his signal-word,

785

A frenzy fired the throng ;

"Portents and miracles impeach

Our sloth—the dumb our duties teach—

And he that gives the mute his speech,

Can bid the weak be strong.

790

To us, as to our lords, are given

A native earth, a promised heaven ;

To us, as to our lords, belongs

The vengeance for our nation's wrongs ;

The choice, 'twixt death or freedom, warms

795

Our breasts as theirs—To arms, to arms !"

To arms they flew,—axe, club, or spear,—
 And mimic ensigns high they rear,
 And, like a banner'd host afar,
 Bear down on England's wearied war. 800

XXXI.

Already scatter'd o'er the plain,
 Reproof, command, and counsel vain,
 The rearward squadrons fled amain,
 Or made but doubtful stay ;—
 But when they mark'd the seeming show 805
 Of fresh and fierce and marshall'd foe,
 The boldest broke array.
 O give their hapless prince his due !
 In vain the royal Edward threw
 His person 'mid the spears; 810
 Cried "Fight!" to terror and despair,
 Menaced, and wept, and tore his hair,
 And cursed their caitiff fears ;
 Till Pembroke turned his bridle rein,
 And forced him from the fatal plain. 815
 With them rode Argentine, until
 They gained the summit of the hill,
 But quitted there the train :—
 "In yonder field a gage I left,—
 I must not live of fame bereft ; 820
 I needs must turn again.
 Speed hence, my Liege, for on your trace
 The fiery Douglas takes the chase ;
 I know his banner well.
 God send my Sovereign joy and bliss, 825
 And many a happier field than this !—
 Once more, my Liege, farewell."

XXXII.

Again he faced the battle-field,—
Wildly they fly, are slain, or yield.
“Now then,” he said, and couch’d his spear, 830
“My course is run, the goal is near;
One effort more, one brave career,
 Must close this race of mine.”
Then in his stirrups rising high,
He shouted loud his battle-cry, 835
 “Saint James for Argentine!”
And, of the bold pursuers, four
The gallant knight from saddle bore;
But not unharm’d—a lance’s point
Has found his breastplate’s loosen’d joint, 840
 An axe has razed his crest;
Yet still on Colonsay’s fierce lord,
Who press’d the chase with gory sword,
 He rode with spear in rest,
And through his bloody tartans bored, 845
 And through his gallant breast.
Nail’d to the earth, the mountaineer
Yet writhed him up against the spear,
 And swung his broadsword round!
—Stirrup, steel-boot, and cuish gave way, 850
Beneath that blow’s tremendous sway,
 The blood gush’d from the wound;
And the grim Lord of Colonsay
 Hath turn’d him on the ground,
And laugh’d in death-pang, that his blade 855
The mortal thrust so well repaid.

XXXIII.

Now toil'd the Bruce, the battle done,
 To use his conquest boldly won;
 And gave command for horse and spear
 To press the Southern's scatter'd rear, 860
 Nor let his broken force combine,
 —When the war-cry of Argentine
 Fell faintly on his ear;
 "Save, save his life," he cried, "O save
 The kind, the noble, and the brave!" 865
 The squadrons round free passage gave,
 The wounded knight drew near;
 He raised his red-cross shield no more,
 Helm, cuish, and breastplate stream'd with gore,
 Yet, as he saw the King advance, 870
 He strove even then to couch his lance—
 The effort was in vain!
 The spur-stroke fail'd to rouse the horse;
 Wounded and weary, in mid course
 He stumbled on the plain. 875
 Then foremost was the generous Bruce
 To raise his head, his helm to loose;—
 "Lord Earl, the day is thine!
 My Sovereign's charge, and adverse fate,
 Have made our meeting all too late: 880
 Yet this may Argentine,
 As boon from ancient comrade, crave—
 A Christian's mass, a soldier's grave."

XXIV.

Bruce press'd his dying hand—its grasp
 Kindly replied ; but, in his clasp, 885
 It stiffen'd and grew cold—
 “And, O farewell !” the victor cried,
 “Of chivalry the flower and pride,
 The arm in battle bold,
 The courteous mien, the noble race, 890
 The stainless faith, the manly face !—
 Bid Ninian's convent light their shrine,
 For late-wake of De Argentine.
 O'er better knight on death-bier laid,
 Torch never gleam'd nor mass was said !” 895

XXXV.

Nor for De Argentine alone,
 Through Ninian's church these torches shone,
 And rose the death-prayer's awful tone.
 That yellow lustre glimmer'd pale,
 On broken plate and bloodied mail, 900
 Rent crest and shatter'd coronet,
 Of Baron, Earl, and Banneret ;
 And the best names that England knew,
 Claim'd in the death-prayer dismal due.
 Yet mourn not, Land of Fame ! 905
 Though ne'er the leopards on thy shield
 Retreated from so sad a field,
 Since Norman William came.
 Oft may thine annals justly boast
 Of battles stern by Scotland lost ; 910
 Grudge not her victory,

When for her freeborn rights she strove;
 Rights dear to all who freedom love,
 To none so dear as thee!

XXXVI.

Turn we to Bruce, whose curious ear 915
 Must from Fitz-Louis tidings hear;
 With him, a hundred voices tell
 Of prodigy and miracle,

“For the mute page had spoke.”—

“Page!” said Fitz-Louis, “rather say, 920
 An angel sent from realms of day,

To burst the English yoke.

I saw his plume and bonnet drop,
 When hurrying from the mountain top;
 A lovely brow, dark locks that wave, 925

To his bright eyes new lustre gave,

A step as light upon the green,

As if his pinions waved unseen!”—

“Spoke he with none?”—“With none—one word
 Burst when he saw the Island Lord, 930
 Returning from the battle-field.”—

“What answer made the Chief?”—“He kneel’d,

Durst not look up, but mutter’d low,

Some mingled sounds that none might know,

And greeted him ’twixt joy and fear, 935

As being of superior sphere.”

XXXVII.

Even upon Bannock's bloody plain,
Heap'd then with thousands of the slain,
'Mid victor monarch's musings high,
Mirth laugh'd in good King Robert's eye. 940
"And bore he such angelic air,
Such noble front, such waving hair?
Hath Ronald kneel'd to him?" he said,
"Then must we call the church to aid—
Our will be to the Abbot known, 945
Ere these strange news are wider blown,
To Cambuskenneth straight ye pass,
And deck the church for solemn mass,
To pay for high deliverance given,
A nation's thanks to gracious Heaven. 950
Let him array, besides, such state,
As should on princes' nuptials wait.
Ourself the cause, through fortune's spite,
'That once broke short that spousal rite,
Ourself will grace with early morn 955
The bridal of the Maid of Lorn."

CONCLUSION.

Go forth, my Song, upon thy venturous way;
Go boldly forth; nor yet thy master blame,
Who chose no patron for his humble lay,
And graced thy numbers with no friendly name, 960
Whose partial zeal might smooth thy path to fame.
There was—and O! how many sorrows crowd
Into these two brief words!—*there was* a claim
By generous friendship given—had fate allow'd,
It well had bid thee rank the proudest of the proud! 965

All angel now—yet little less than all,
While still a pilgrim in our world below!
What 'vails it us that patience to recall,
Which hid its own to soothe all other woe;
What 'vails to tell, how Virtue's purest glow 970
Shone yet more lovely in a form so fair:
And, least of all, what 'vails the world should know,
That one poor garland, twined to deck thy hair,
Is hung upon thy hearse, to droop and wither there!

NOTES.

Words followed by an asterisk () are explained in the Glossary.*

Advertisement. *Lord Hailes...Archdeacon Barbour:* see pp. xxii-iii.

CANTO I.

Introduction. (Lines 1-45.) *The poet describes the scene in late autumn around his house at Abbotsford. Like the solitary gleaner by the banks of the Tweed he is going forth as a gleaner into the fields of ancient Scottish history.*

These lines, like the Introductions to the other Cantos and the Conclusion, are written in the Spenserian stanza (see p. xxvii). In these portions of the poem Scott usually turns aside from the narrative either to speak of his own times, or to moralise, as in Canto II. When Scott was writing the first three Cantos of the *Lord of the Isles* in the autumn of 1814, he was residing in a cottage on the estate which he had recently bought at Abbotsford on the Tweed.

2. *Somerville:* Lord Somerville, an intimate friend of Scott, lived on the banks of the Tweed opposite to Abbotsford.

3. *russet**: the woods appear to be covered with a russet robe, dropped with gold; in this sense *dropped*=dotted with spots of colour. Compare Milton, *Paradise Lost*, VII. 406, "Their waved coats dropt with gold." Scott, like the earlier Scottish poets, has a keen eye for colour, and loves to dwell on the colours rather than the forms of a landscape.

4. *tributaries:* within a short distance of Abbotsford the Tweed is joined by many *waters* (i.e. streams) famous in Scottish song—the Yarrow, the Ettrick, the Gala, the Allan, the Leader.

7. *cushat*: the ring-dove or wood-pigeon.

9. *Ettrick's western fell**: from Abbotsford the sun appears to set amid the fells on the west bank of the Ettrick; the highest point in the range is Ettrick Pen.

10. *Gala*: John Scott of Gala, the owner of an estate named Gala, on the Gala Water. (It is a custom in Scotland to call a man by the name of his estate.) He was a kinsman of Walter Scott's; hence "*kindred banks*" in line 11.

15. *harvest-home*: the harvest-home or 'kirk supper,' as it is called in Scotland, was heartily observed by Scott. He writes in his *Diary* for Oct. 26, 1827, "We had the kirk supper. I never saw a set of finer lads and lasses, and blithely did they ply their heels till five in the morning."

16. *waste*: bare, now that the corn is reaped: so in line 25.

17. *autumnal train*: throughout these lines autumn is personified—is regarded as a departing sovereign, clad in the royal mantle (lines 2, 20); so here the reapers are spoken of as his train or court. Similarly November is personified as a hunter (line 33).

24. *the last bright tints*: of the setting sun; compare lines 30, 31.

33. *wound*: blown, sounded. See *wind* in Glossary.

35. *inquest*: search.

36. *happier bards**: poets such as Barbour (see p. xxiii).

38. *Albyn**: Scotland.

39. *by the rough West reproved*: swept over by the wild Atlantic gales.

41. *Coolin*: a steep and rugged range of mountains on the south coast of Skye; the scenery is described in III. xiii-xvii, IV. 1-27.

42. *Seer*: in the Highlands a seer was a person possessed of the power of 'second sight,' which, it was thought, enabled him to foretell coming events. Such a person was likely to treasure up ancient legends.

43. *Reay*: a wild, dreary district in Sutherlandshire, on the north coast of Scotland.

44. *Harries*: usually spelt Harris, a district in the Outer Hebrides, which includes the south part of the largest island (the northern part is Lewis) and some of the adjacent small islands.

Iona was the chief burial-place of the Scotch kings down to Macbeth and of the Lords of the Isles and other western chiefs.

45. *coil**: trouble.

I—IV. The Minstrel's ode to wake Edith of Lorn on her wedding morning.

Ronald, Lord of the Isles, is to marry Edith, the heiress of the kindred House of Lorn, and according to a Highland custom she has come to his castle of Artornish that the wedding may take place there.

46-7. *sung**, *rung*: this form of the past tense of *sing* and *ring* was generally used by Scott, both in verse and in prose.

47. *Artornish*: "The ruins of the Castle of Artornish are situated upon a promontory on the Morven or mainland side of the Sound of Mull, a name given to the deep arm of the sea which divides that island from the continent. The situation is wild and romantic in the highest degree, having on the one hand a high and precipitous chain of rocks overhanging the sea, and on the other the narrow entrance to the beautiful salt-water lake, called Loch Alline, which is in many places finely fringed with copsewood. The ruins of Artornish are not now very considerable, and consist chiefly of the remains of an old keep, or tower, with fragments of outward defences. But, in former days, it was a place of great consequence, being one of the principal strongholds which the Lords of the Isles, during the period of their stormy independence, possessed upon the mainland of Argyleshire. Here they assembled what popular tradition calls their parliaments, meaning, I suppose, their *cour plénière*, or assembly of feudal and patriarchal vassals and dependents."—*Scott*¹.

Probably however Artornish Castle was not built till the middle of the 14th century, and in Bruce's days the chief seat of the Lord of the Isles was at Islay (spelt Ilay by Scott, as in line 59). The most memorable period in the history of Artornish was in 1461, when John de Yle, Earl of Ross and Lord of the Isles, sent from it commissioners to make a treaty with Edward IV of England, agreeing to become Edward's vassal and to assist him and the exiled James, Earl of Douglas, to subdue the realm of Scotland. "Such was the treaty of Artornish: but it does not appear that the allies ever made any very active effort to realize their ambitious designs. It will serve to show both the power of these reguli², and their independence upon the crown of Scotland."—*Scott*.

¹ Passages quoted from Scott are extracted from his notes to the poem, unless it is otherwise stated.

² Under-kings or chieftains.

51. *diapason**: harmony.

52. *Inninmore* is a bay east of Artornish, *Loch-Alline*, a loch west of the castle (see note on line 47).

63. *guerdon**: reward; the ancient bards* received handsome presents from the nobles whose praises they sang.

69. *descant*: in medieval music a descant was an accompaniment sung or played to the simple plain-song; it formed an air to which the plain-song was the bass. So the following lines (70-91) form a descant on the simple theme "Wake, Maid of Lorn!"

74. *Lettermore*: a forest in the north-west of the island of Mull.

76. *Heiskar's seal*: "The seal displays a taste for music, which could scarcely be expected from his habits and local predilections. They will long follow a boat in which any musical instrument is played, and even a tune simply whistled has attractions for them. The Dean of the Isles says of Heiskar, a small uninhabited rock about twelve (Scottish) miles from the isle of Uist, that an infinite slaughter of seals takes place there."—*Scott*.

79. *poise him* = poise himself—use of the personal pronoun for the reflexive, common in Old English, and repeatedly imitated by Scott.

Ben-Cailliach: a mountain at the extreme western point of the island of Skye.

89. *mocks*: vies with.

105. *plighted**: promised.

112. *pibrochs*: bagpipes. Properly pibroch is the Gaelic name for a tune played on the bagpipes.

117. *read* = interpreted,—the original meaning of the verb in Old English.

V—VI. *Edith is attired by her maidens for the bridal.*

120. *had been* = would have been.

134. *Lochryan*: a bay opening northwards on the coast of Wigtownshire. In ancient times Great Britain was famous for its pearls.

VII—XIII. *Edith is dejected, and her foster-mother endeavours in vain to cheer her.*

160. *that bond*: the bond between foster-mother and child.

166-9. Edith responded to their attention no more than if she had been the image of the patron saint of a convent being adorned by the nuns.

176. *battled*: surrounded by a battlement.

177. "The Sound of Mull, which divides that island from the continent of Scotland, is one of the most striking scenes which the Hebrides afford to the traveller. Sailing from Oban to Aros or Tobermory, through a narrow channel, yet deep enough to bear vessels of the largest burden, he has on his left the bold and mountainous shores of Mull; on the right those of that district of Argyleshire called Morven, or Morvern, successively indented by deep salt-water lochs, running up many miles inland. To the south-eastward arise a prodigious range of mountains, among which Cruachan Ben is preeminent. And to the north-east is the no less huge and picturesque range of the Ardnamurchan hills. Many ruinous castles, situated generally upon cliffs overhanging the ocean, add interest to the scene. Those of Dunolly and Dunstaffnage are first passed, then that of Duart, formerly belonging to the chief of the warlike and powerful sept of Macleans, and the scene of Miss Baillie's beautiful tragedy, entitled the Family Legend. Still passing on to the northward, Artornish and Aros become visible upon the opposite shores; and, lastly, Mingarry, and other ruins of less distinguished note. In fine weather a grander and more impressive scene, both from its natural beauties, and associations with ancient history and tradition, can hardly be imagined. When the weather is rough the passage is both difficult and dangerous, from the narrowness of the channel, and in part from the number of inland lakes, out of which sally forth a number of conflicting and thwarting tides, making the navigation perilous to open boats. The sudden flaws and gusts of wind which issue without a moment's warning from the mountain glens are equally formidable. So that in unsettled weather, a stranger, if not much accustomed to the sea, may sometimes add to the other sublime sensations excited by the scene, that feeling of dignity which arises from a sense of danger."—*Scott*.

179. *swarth**: dark.

182-3. "The number of the western isles of Scotland exceeds two hundred, of which St Kilda is the most northerly, anciently called Hirth or Hirt. Ilay is by far the most fertile of the Hebrides. This was in ancient times the principal abode of the Lords of the Isles, being, if not the largest, the most important island of their archipelago."—*Scott*. He proceeds to quote the following account of their grandeur from Martin's *Account of the Western Isles* (A.D. 1716): "Loch-Finlagan, about three miles in circumference, affords salmon, trouts, and eels: this lake lies in the centre of the isle. The Isle Finlagan, from which this

lake hath its name, is in it. It's famous for being once the court in which the great Mac-Donald, King of the Isles, had his residence; his houses, chapel, &c. are now ruinous. His guards de corps, called Lucht-Tach, kept guard on the lake side nearest to the isle: the walls of their houses are still to be seen there. The high court of judicature, consisting of fourteen, sat always here; and there was an appeal to them from all the courts in the isles: the eleventh share of the sum in debate was due to the principal judge. There was a big stone of seven feet square, in which there was a deep impression made to receive the feet of Mac-Donald; for he was crowned King of the Isles standing in this stone, and swore that he would continue his vassals in the possession of their lands, and do exact justice to all his subjects: and then his father's sword was put into his hand. The Bishop of Argyle and seven priests anointed him king, in presence of all the heads of the tribes in the isles and continent, who were his vassals: at which time the orator rehearsed a catalogue of his ancestors."

184. *mainland*: used adverbially = towards the mainland.

188. *Mingarry*: "The Castle of Mingarry is situated on the sea-coast of the district of Ardnamurchan. The ruins, which are tolerably entire, are surrounded by a very high wall, forming a kind of polygon, for the purpose of adapting itself to the projecting angles of a precipice overhanging the sea, on which the castle stands. It was anciently the residence of the Mac-Ians, a clan of Mac-Donalds, descended from Ian, or John, a grandson of Angus Og, Lord of the Isles."—*Scott*.

190. Dunstaffnage Castle, commanding the entry to Loch Etive, was the seat of government among the Scots, from 500 to 843 A.D. The Stone of Destiny, now placed under the Coronation Chair in Westminster Abbey, was used here before it was carried to Scone. Connal or Connel Ferry is situated at the mouth of Loch Etive, where the loch "is obstructed by a reef of rock stretching two-thirds across, which, at spring tides, during ebb, presents the phenomenon of a sea cataract, pouring over the obstructive wall of rock, 5 or 6 ft. high, with a tremendous roar."—*Murray's Hand-book*.

196 *impledged*: see *pledge* in the Glossary.

197. "Somerled was thane of Argyle and Lord of the Isles, about the middle of the twelfth century. He seems to have exercised his authority in both capacities, independent of the crown of Scotland, against which he often stood in hostility. He made various incursions upon the western lowlands during the reign of Malcolm IV, and seems to have made peace with him upon the terms of an independent prince,

about the year 1157. In 1164 he resumed the war against Malcolm, and invaded Scotland with a large, but probably a tumultuary army, collected in the isles, in the mainland of Argyleshire, and in the neighbouring provinces of Ireland. He was defeated and slain in an engagement with a very inferior force, near Renfrew. His son Gillicolane fell in the same battle. This mighty chieftain married a daughter of Olaus, King of Man. From him our genealogists deduce two dynasties, distinguished in the stormy history of the middle ages; the Lords of the Isles descended from his elder son Ronald,—and the Lords of Lorn, who took their surname of M'Dougal, as descended of his second son Dougal. That Somerled's territories upon the mainland, and upon the islands, should have been thus divided between his two sons, instead of passing to the elder exclusively, may illustrate the uncertainty of descent among the great Highland families."—*Scott*.

200. *Lord of the Isles*: "The representative of this independent principality, for such it seems to have been, though acknowledging occasionally the preeminence of the Scottish crown, was, at the period of the poem, Angus, called Angus Og; but the name has been, *euphonia gratiâ*¹, exchanged for that of Ronald, which frequently occurs in the genealogy. Angus was a protector of Robert Bruce, whom he received in his castle of Dunnaverty, during the time of his greatest distress."—*Scott*.

203. The sentence might have run 'Ronald...is to be your bridegroom,' but Morag leaves it uncompleted and hastens on the question in lines 204-5.

204. *bondsman**: serf.

207. *beltane fire*: a festival bonfire; properly a fire lighted on the night of the beltane or May-day festival.

208. *warder*: the sentinel on watch at a castle.

210. *says grateful mass*: says mass as an act of thanksgiving.

211. *galla-glass**: a heavy-armed soldier: Shakespeare, *Macbeth*,

I. 2. 13—

"The merciless Macdonwald

.....from the western isles

Of kerns and gallow-glasses is supplied."

212. *boor**: peasant.

228. *of price*: costly.

229. *gauds** of rare device: jewels of quaint and beautiful workmanship.

¹ For the sake of euphony.

245-7. As a summer breeze is more delightful if it brings the scent of flowers, so the story of a brave deed moved me more deeply if Ronald was named in it.

263. *Bentalla*: a mountain in the isle of Mull.

266. *may not*: dare not.

267. *the House of Lorn*: Scott says of the MacDougals (see note on l. 197) that, possessing the greater part of the three districts of Lorn in Argyleshire, "they might rather be considered as petty princes than as feudal barons. The Lord of Lorn, who flourished during the wars of Bruce, was Allaster (or Alexander) MacDougal, called Allaster of Argyle. He had married the third daughter of John, called the Red Comyn, who was slain by Bruce in the Dominican Church at Dumfries, and hence he was a mortal enemy of that prince, and more than once reduced him to great straits during the early and distressed period of his reign, as we shall have repeated occasion to notice. Bruce, when he began to obtain an ascendancy in Scotland, took the first opportunity in his power to requite these injuries. He marched into Argyleshire to lay waste the country. John of Lorn, son of the chieftain, was posted with his followers in the formidable pass between Dalmally and Bunawe. It is a narrow path along the verge of the huge and precipitous mountain, called Cruachan-Ben, and guarded on the other side by a precipice overhanging Loch Awe. The pass seems to the eye of a soldier as strong, as it is wild and romantic to that of an ordinary traveller. But the skill of Bruce had anticipated this difficulty. While his main body, engaged in a skirmish with the men of Lorn, detained their attention to the front of their position, James of Douglas, with Sir Alexander Fraser, Sir William Wiseman, and Sir Andrew Grey, ascended the mountain with a select body of archery, and obtained possession of the heights which commanded the pass. A volley of arrows descending upon them directly warned the Argyleshire men of their perilous situation, and their resistance, which had hitherto been bold and manly, was changed into a precipitate flight. The deep and rapid river of Awe was then (we learn the fact from Barbour with some surprise) crossed by a bridge. This bridge the mountaineers attempted to demolish, but Bruce's followers were too close upon their rear; they were, therefore, without refuge and defence, and were dispersed with great slaughter." Scott describes the decline of the family of MacDougal, caused by its enmity to the house of Bruce, "but it continued to survive the loss of power, and affords a very rare, if not a unique instance of a family of such unlimited power, and so distinguished during the middle ages, surviving the decay

of their grandeur, and flourishing in a private station. The Castle of Dunolly, near Oban, with its dependencies, was the principal part of what remained to them, with their right of chieftainship over the families of their name and blood. The heir of Dunolly fell lately in Spain, fighting under the Duke of Wellington,—a death well becoming his ancestry." His younger brother, Sir John MacDougall, a distinguished naval officer, died in 1865.

273. *Aros bay*: on the coast of Mull, opposite Artornish; the Lord of the Isles had another castle there.

276-7. Note again Scott's eye for colour, as in line 3.

282. *seaward cast*: with her course directed towards the sea.

284. *veil'd**: lowered; usually spelt *vail'd*.

287. *mates*: vies with.

291. *type of his course*: as the bark fights against the gale instead of seeking shelter at Artornish, so Ronald's one aim is to keep away from Edith.

296. *scud*: squall.

299. *lee**: the side of the ship away from the wind.

302. *shelves*: the rocks of the shore. In Scott's original manuscript this line ran "still nearer to the breakers' verge."

XIV—XVI. The Lord of the Isles sailing with his fleet to his bridal at Artornish passes a skiff with the Bruces on board.

The strong west wind was favourable to the Lord of the Isles as he crossed the Sound from Aros to Artornish; it was against the crew of the skiff, who were trying to pass through the Sound in the opposite direction—westward.

306. *sooth**: truth.

308. *stooping*: sloping.

313. *meed*: reward, wages. The slight progress of the skiff may be compared to a labourer's niggardly day's wages.

316. *wore*: to wear a ship is to alter her course by turning her head away from the wind.

317. *boltsprit*: bowsprit. Often, before she changed her course, she ran so near the shore that her bowsprit was among the breakers.

328. *trick'd**: adorned.

330. *Island chivalry*: the warriors of the Isles.

336. *boss*: the bosses are the knobs studding the bridle.

340. *hauberks**: coats of mail protecting the neck and breast.

346. *Saline* (usually spelt *Salen*) is a village on the coast of Mull about 3 miles S.E. of Aros Castle; *Scallastle* is again a little further east.

347. *misty shores*: the island of Mull is said to be the rainiest place in the dominions of the Lord of the Isles.

349. *Duart*: a castle in Mull at the east end of the Sound: see note on line 177.

360. *wold**: upland pasture.

361. *scatheless* (see *scathe* in Glossary): unharmed; the wolf would have been more likely to pass the fold without harming it, than the galleys to leave the skiff unchallenged.

369. *bonnet*: the Highland cap.

370. *cheer**: mien, appearance.

XVII—XXIII. The Bruces are compelled at nightfall to seek refuge at Artornish.

374. *armada**: fleet.

376. *wassail** *rout**: the revelling assembly.

388-94. See Scott's note on line 177 as to the dangers arising from the tides.

392. *jet*: rear, throw up.

395. *lights of eve were past*: the sun had set.

402-4. *One*, Edward Bruce; the *Leader*, his elder brother, King Robert Bruce. They were accompanied by their sister Isabel (line 413).

406. *wilder'd**: torn by conflicting currents.

421. *lour**: threatening.

432. To escape shipwreck Bruce decides to reverse his course, hoping that the wind will carry him past the "western bay" (line 433)—that is, Loch Alline (which is on the west of Artornish)—and the "hostile fleet" moored there, and enable him to reach the small bay immediately under the castle on the east.

452. *lightnings of the wave*: "The phenomenon called by sailors Sea-fire, is one of the most beautiful and interesting which is witnessed in the Hebrides. At times the ocean appears entirely illuminated around the vessel, and a long train of lambent coruscations are perpetually bursting upon the sides of the vessel, or pursuing her wake through the darkness. They remind one strongly of the description of

the sea-snakes in Mr Coleridge's wild, but highly poetical ballad of the Ancient Mariner:—

‘Beyond the shadow of the ship
I watch'd the water-snakes,
They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they rear'd, the elvish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.’—*Scott*.

This phosphorescence is produced by the light emitted from minute animals in the water of the sea.

462. *meteor light*: Does this mean the Northern Lights (*aurora borealis*) or the volcanic flames of Hecla reflected on the midnight sky? Probably the Northern Lights, which afford a much truer and more beautiful resemblance to the phosphorescence. For *Hecla's sky* a prose writer would say ‘the sky in Iceland’ or ‘in the Arctic regions.’

475. *eastern fell*: the heights to the east of Artornish.

482. *like*: the use of *like* as a conjunction is sometimes found in Shakespeare and in other writers, but it is now considered incorrect. In place of it *as* is used or (in the older writers) *like as*: “so let us love, dear love, like as we ought”—Spenser, *Sonnet LXVIII*.

484-6. ‘When peasants on the cliffs hear the mingled battle-cries of the victors and the vanquished rising from the plain.’

*XXIV—XXXI. The Bruces obtain shelter at Artornish
without disclosing their name.*

496. *lee**: protection.

499. *a stair*: “The fortress of a Hebridean chief was almost always on the sea-shore, for the facility of communication which the ocean afforded. Nothing can be more wild than the situations which they chose, and the devices by which the architects endeavoured to defend them. Narrow stairs and arched vaults were the usual mode of access, and the drawbridge appears at Dunstaffnage, and elsewhere, to have fallen from the gate of the building to the top of such a staircase; so that any one advancing with hostile purpose, found himself in a state of exposed and precarious elevation, with a gulf between him and the object of his attack.

“These fortresses were guarded with equal care. The duty of the watch devolved chiefly upon an officer called the Cockman, who had the charge of challenging all who approached the castle. The very

ancient family of Mac-Niel of Barra kept this attendant at their castle about a hundred years ago. Martin gives the following account of the difficulty which attended his procuring entrance there:—"The little island Kismul lies about a quarter of a mile from the south of this isle (Barra); it is the seat of Mackneil of Barra; there is a stone wall round it two stories high, reaching the sea; and within the wall there is an old tower and a hall, with other houses about it. There is a little magazine in the tower, to which no stranger has access. I saw the officer called the Cockman, and an old cock he is; when I bid him ferry me over the water to the island, he told me that he was but an inferior officer, his business being to attend in the tower; but if (says he) the constable, who then stood on the wall, will give you access, I'll ferry you over. I desired him to procure me the constable's permission, and I would reward him; but having waited some hours for the constable's answer, and not receiving any, I was obliged to return without seeing the famous fort. Mackneil and his lady being absent was the cause of this difficulty, and of my not seeing the place. I was told some weeks after that the constable was very apprehensive of some design I might have in viewing the fort, and thereby to expose it to the conquest of a foreign power; of which I suppose there was no great cause of fear.'"—*Scott*.

503. *brand**: sword.

508. The warder comes to the postern*—not the great gate of the castle, which is described in Stanza xxix.

509. *cresset**: a vessel carried on a pole, and containing lighted pitch or the like.

519. *had made*: would have made.

522. *brook**: allow, admit.

535. *Erin*: Ireland.

536. *Norweyan*: Norwegian.

540. *list**: wish.

541. *bound by a vow* not to disclose their names.

544-7. These words, when sounded in a noble ear, have a meaning which gives us rightful claim to safe shelter, &c.

551. *Hold*: castle.

554. *lea* (see *lee* in Glossary): meadow.

556. *revolves*: is closed, barred.

562. *ally*: the Lord of the Isles was an ally of Edward I.

566. *Knight of Ellerslie*: Sir William Wallace, who was born at Ellerslie or Elderslie, an estate on the south bank of the Clyde close to Renfrew. In 1297 he raised the country against the English rule, but

was defeated at Falkirk in 1298 and executed at London in 1305—two years before the date of the story.

568. *Comyn fell*: see note on II. 214.

569. *fell**: cruel.

570. *term**: period.

571. *vassals* is here used vaguely in the sense of servants.

580. *shed*: fell.

586. *boun'd** *him*: set himself.

587. *casque**: helmet.

589-95. The defences at the great gate of the castle were:—
(1) a portcullis* or sliding door, pointed with iron, which could be dropped from the outer arch, in which it was suspended, to bar the gateway; (2) a strong oak door in which was a smaller door or wicket strengthened with brass bars; this could be opened if the great door was closed, to admit visitors one by one; (3) if the invaders had burst through these outer defences, they found themselves in a narrow passage which would admit only a few at a time, and, while passing through it, they would be under fire from archers at loopholes.

592. *strait**: narrow.

596. *ward**: defence.

600. The *yeomen* were the servants, and the *squires* the gentlemen attending on knights assembled at the feast; the pages and grooms were the servants of the lord's household.

608. *moulding stark**: strong muscular build.

618. *involved*: wrapped (Latin *involvere*).

622. *pall**: rich cloth.

627. *haught**: haughty.

633. *Seneschal**: steward.

641. *Western land and sea*: the western coast and islands of Scotland.

642. *gentles*: formerly *gentle* was used as a noun = a person of gentle birth, and *gentles* was a courteous mode of addressing one's audience.

CANTO II.

Introduction. (Lines 1-9.) *Before describing the banquet the poet warns us that "Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness"*—Proverbs xiv. 13.

6-7. *throe*: anguish; *the heart's true livery*: the garb or appearance which expresses the real feeling of the heart.

II—V. *The bridal feast at Artornish Castle.*

10. *beakers' clang*: the clashing of cups, when the feasters clashed them together as they drank a health.

24. *pledge**: a toast or health.

31. *gave to*: attributed to.

37. *De Argentine*: "Sir Egidius or Giles de Argentine was one of the most accomplished knights of the period. He had served in the wars of Henry of Luxemburg with such high reputation, that he was, in popular estimation, the third worthy of the age. Those to whom fame assigned precedence over him were Henry of Luxemburg himself and Robert Bruce. Argentine had warred in Palestine, encountered thrice with the Saracens, and had slain two antagonists in each engagement:—an easy matter, he said, for one Christian knight to slay two Pagan dogs. His death corresponded with his high character. With Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, he was appointed to attend immediately upon the person of Edward II at Bannockburn. When the day was utterly lost they forced the king from the field. De Argentine saw the king safe from immediate danger, and then took his leave of him. 'God be with you, sir,' he said, 'it is not my wont to fly.' So saying, he turned his horse, cried his war-cry, plunged into the midst of the combatants, and was slain. Baston, a rhyming monk who had been brought by Edward to celebrate his expected triumph, and who was compelled by the victors to compose a poem on his defeat, mentions with some feeling the death of Sir Giles de Argentine:

Nobilis Argenten, pugil inclyte, dulcis Egidi,

Vix scieram mentem cum te succumbere vidi."—*Scott.*

These lines may be translated: 'High-born Argentine, famous fighter, gentle Giles, I scarce possessed my mind when I saw thee fall.'

41. *transport*: excessive joy.

45. *cheer**: mood or expression.

54. *the mighty cup*: in describing this cup Scott had in mind a goblet of which he gives an account in a note: "A Hebridean drinking cup, of the most ancient and curious workmanship, has long been preserved in the Castle of Dunvegan in Skye, the romantic seat of Mac-Leod of Mac-Leod, the chief of that ancient and powerful clan. This curious piece of antiquity is nine inches and three-quarters in inside depth, and ten and a half in height on the outside, the extreme measure over the lips being four inches and a half. The cup is divided into two parts by a wrought ledge, beautifully ornamented, about three-

fourths of an inch in breadth. Beneath this ledge the shape of the cup is rounded off, and terminates in a flat circle, like that of a tea-cup; four short feet support the whole. Above the projecting ledge the shape of the cup is nearly square, projecting outward at the brim. The cup is made of wood (oak to all appearance), but most curiously wrought and embossed with silver work, which projects from the vessel. There are a number of regular projecting sockets, which appear to have been set with stones; two or three of them still hold pieces of coral, the rest are empty. At the four corners of the projecting ledge, or cornice, are four sockets, much larger, probably for pebbles or precious stones. The workmanship of the silver is extremely elegant, and appears to have been highly gilded. The ledge brim and legs of the cup are of silver. The family tradition bears that it was the property of Neil Ghlune-du, or Black-knee. But who this Neil was, no one pretends to say. Around the edge of the cup is a legend, perfectly legible, in the Saxon black-letter."—*Scott*. This inscription, which in Scott's day was thought to bear the date of 993 A.D., is now interpreted as saying that the cup belonged to John Maguire, chief of Fermanagh, and his wife, A.D. 1493. It is therefore Irish.

55. *erst**: once. *Somerled*: see note on I. 197.

78. *gibbet*: an upright post with a projecting arm from which the victim was hung in chains; *wheel*: the victim was stretched on a cart-wheel, and as the wheel revolved his limbs were broken by blows from an iron bar.

VI—VIII. *The Bruces are received at the banquet.*

87. *presences*: the appearance which they *presented*; in 131 it means the company, the assemblage of those *present*.

90. *Seneschal**: Scott explains that "the Sewer, to whom, rather than the Seneschal, the office of arranging the guests of an island chief appertained, was an officer of importance in the family of a Hebridean chief.—'Every family had commonly two stewards, which, in their language, were called Marischal Tach: the first of these served always at home, and was obliged to be versed in the pedigree of all the tribes in the isles and in the highlands of Scotland; for it was his province to assign every man at table his seat according to his quality; and this was done without one word speaking, only by drawing a score with a white rod, which this Marischal had in his hand, before the person who was

bid by him to sit down: and this was necessary to prevent disorder and contention; and though the Marischal might sometimes be mistaken, the master of the family incurred no censure by such an escape; but this custom has been laid aside of late.'—Martin's *Western Isles*."

96. *gilded spurs* were worn only by knights.

99. *dais**: the great hall-table, elevated a step or two above the rest of the room.

109. *bower**: the apartment of the lady of the house. *hall*: the principal room of the house, in which the whole household assembled for meals and amusements.

111. *worship*: worshipfulness, dignity.

113. *sone*: belt.

115. *gage**: wager.

124. *rout**: crowd, assembly.

135. *indifferent*: unimportant.

139. In his original manuscript Scott wrote:—

"Nor hide her form's fair symmetry,"

and that is no doubt his meaning; but before the poem was published he altered *hide* to *could*—doubtless to avoid the tame repetition of *hide*. It is hard however to make the words bear the required sense; their natural meaning is, 'nor could her form's fair symmetry hide her motions' grace,'—which is nonsense.

IX—XIII. Lorn, suspecting that the strangers were the Bruces, bids his minstrel sing "the Broach of Lorn," a song certain to offend them.

150. *Carrick's outlaw'd Chief*: Robert Bruce, who inherited from his mother the earldom of Carrick, which is a district south of Ayr. "It must be remembered by all who have read the Scottish history, that after he had slain Comyn at Dumfries, and asserted his right to the Scottish crown, Robert Bruce was reduced to the greatest extremity by the English and their adherents. He was crowned at Scone by the general consent of the Scottish barons, but his authority endured but a short time. According to the phrase said to have been used by his wife, he was for that year 'a summer king, but not a winter one.' On the 29th March, 1306, he was crowned king at Scone. Upon the 19th June, in the same year, he was totally defeated at Methven,

near Perth; and his most important adherents, with few exceptions, were either executed or compelled to embrace the English interest, for safety of their lives and fortunes. After this disaster his life was that of an outlaw rather than a candidate for monarchy. He separated himself from the females of his retinue, whom he sent for safety to the Castle of Kildrummie, in Aberdeenshire, where they afterward became captives to England. From Aberdeenshire Bruce retreated to the mountainous parts of Breadalbane, and approached the borders of Argyleshire. There he was defeated¹ by the Lord of Lorn, who had assumed arms against him in revenge of the death of his relative, John the Red Comyn. Escaped from this peril, Bruce, with his few attendants, subsisted by hunting and fishing, until the weather compelled them to seek better sustenance and shelter than the Highland mountains afforded. With great difficulty they crossed, from Rowardennan probably, to the western banks of Lochlomond, partly in a miserable boat, and partly by swimming. The valiant and loyal Earl of Lennox, to whose territories they had now found their way, welcomed them with tears, but was unable to assist them to make an effectual head. The Lord of the Isles, then in possession of great part of Cantyre, received the fugitive monarch and future restorer of his country's independence, in his Castle of Dunnaverty, in that district. But treason, says Barbour, was so general, that the king durst not abide there. Accordingly, with the remnant of his followers, Bruce embarked for Rath-Erin, or Rachrine, the Recina of Ptolemy, a small island, lying almost opposite to the shores of Ballycastle, on the coast of Ireland. The islanders at first fled from their new and armed guests, but upon some explanation submitted themselves to Bruce's sovereignty. He resided among them until the approach of spring [1307], when he again returned to Scotland, with the desperate resolution to reconquer his kingdom, or perish in the attempt. The progress of his success, from its commencement to its completion, forms the brightest period in Scottish history."—*Scott*.

164. *bill*: a battle-axe.

170. *jars*: quarrels.

181. *Chieftain*: Allaster of Lorn, whose minstrel Ferrand was. "It has been generally mentioned in the preceding notes, that Robert Bruce, after his defeat at Methven, being hard pressed by the English, endeavoured, with the dispirited remnant of his followers, to escape from Breadalbane and the mountains of Perthshire into the Argyleshire.

¹ See notes on l. 267, ll. 282.

Highlands. But he was encountered and repulsed, after a very severe engagement, by the Lord of Lorn. Bruce's personal strength and courage were never displayed to greater advantage than in this conflict. There is a tradition in the family of the Mac-Dougals of Lorn, that their chieftain engaged in personal battle with Bruce himself, while the latter was employed in protecting the retreat of his men; that Mac-Dougal was struck down by the king, whose strength of body was equal to his vigour of mind, and would have been slain on the spot had not two of Lorn's vassals, a father and son, whom tradition terms M'Keoch, rescued him, by seizing the mantle of the monarch, and dragging him from above his adversary. Bruce rid himself of these foes by two blows of his redoubted battle-axe, but was so closely pressed by the other followers of Lorn, that he was forced to abandon the mantle and brooch which fastened it, clasped in the dying grasp of the Mac-Keochs. A studded brooch, said to have been that which King Robert lost upon this occasion, was long preserved in the family of Mac-Dougal, and was lost in a fire which consumed their temporary residence."—*Scott*.

183. *gems of price*: Scott tells us that "Great art and expense was bestowed upon the *fibula*, or brooch, which secured the plaid, when the wearer was a person of importance. Martin mentions having seen a silver brooch of a hundred marks value. 'It was broad as any ordinary pewter plate, the whole curiously engraved with various animals, &c. There was a lesser buckle, which was worn in the middle of the larger, and above two ounces weight; it had in the centre a large piece of crystal, or some finer stone, and this was set all round with several finer stones of a lesser size.'—*Western Islands*."

184. *tartans*: the woollen stuffs, chequered with the colours of the wearer's clan, from which the Highlanders' plaids were made.

185. *night's pale rainbow*: the Northern Lights, or a lunar rainbow.

188. *highland mountain*: the brown crystals, known as cairngorms, are found on the mountains of the Cairngorm group and elsewhere among the Grampians.

193. *dwarf's*: the dwarfs of the Norse legends were spirits of the mines, skilful in working metals.

swart: dark: see *swarth* in the Glossary.

195. *from England's love, or France's fear*: Has Edward I sent the jewel as a token of his friendship, or has the King of France sent it from fear that the alliance of Lorn with England will weaken France?

196. *nothing tell*: tell not at all of.

206-8. The Douchart (Dochart) flows close to the battle-field,

which is still called Dalry (the King's field); it then flows through Glen Dochart into Loch Tay. Teyndrum (Tyndrum), a village not far from Dalry, is now a station on the Callender and Oban Railway. Bendourish is a mountain in the same district of Perthshire.

210. *scathe**: hurt.

212-3. "The gallant Sir James¹, called the Good Lord Douglas, the most faithful and valiant of Bruce's adherents, was wounded at the battle of Dalry. Sir Nigel, or Niel Campbell, was also in that unfortunate skirmish. He married Marjorie, sister to Robert Bruce, and was among his most faithful followers."—*Scott*.

214. "Every reader must recollect that the proximate cause of Bruce's asserting his right to the crown of Scotland was the death of John, called the Red Comyn. The causes of this act of violence, equally extraordinary from the high rank both of the perpetrator and sufferer, and from the place where the slaughter was committed, are variously related by the Scottish and English historians, and cannot now be ascertained. The fact that they met at the high altar of the Minorites' or Greyfriars' Church in Dumfries, that their difference broke out into high and insulting language, and that Bruce drew his dagger and stabbed Comyn, is certain. Rushing to the door of the church, Bruce met two powerful barons, Kirkpatrick of Closeburn, and James de Lindsay, who eagerly asked him what tidings. 'Bad tidings,' answered Bruce, 'I doubt I have slain Comyn.'—'Doubtest thou?' said Kirkpatrick; 'I make sicker' (i.e. sure). With these words, he and Lindsay rushed into the church and despatched the wounded Comyn. The Kirkpatricks of Closeburn assumed, in memory of this deed, a hand holding a dagger, with the memorable words, 'I make sicker.'"—*Scott*.

216-7. Barendown and De la Haye are mentioned by Barbour as remaining in arms with Bruce after the battle of Methven. De la Haye was made Constable of Scotland by Bruce and was killed at the battle of Halidoun Hill (1333 A.D.). The office of High Constable of Scotland is still held by his descendants, the Hays, Earls of Erroll.

221. *cord*: the hangman's rope.

XIV. The Bruces are discovered.

237. *chafe thee*: vex thyself—see note on I. 79.

240-50. The account which Bruce here gives of his exploits at the

¹ See also note on IV. 454.

battle of Dalry, and which does not agree with Ferrand's account, is taken from Barbour's *Bruce*, which tells the story thus : Bruce ordered his men to retreat, himself bringing up the rear, and repeatedly turning and driving back the most venturesome assailants. Three of Lorn's followers resolved to rid their chief of this formidable foe. "They watched their opportunity until Bruce's party had entered a pass between a lake (Loch Dochart probably) and a precipice, where the king, who was the last of the party, had scarce room to manage his steed. Here his three foes sprung upon him at once. One seized his bridle, but received a wound which hewed off his arm; a second grasped Bruce by the stirrup and leg, and endeavoured to dismount him, but the king, putting spurs to his horse, threw him down, still holding by the stirrup. The third, taking advantage of an acclivity, sprang up behind him upon his horse. Bruce, however, whose personal strength is uniformly mentioned as exceeding that of most men, extricated himself from his grasp, threw him to the ground, and cleft his skull with his sword. By similar exertion he drew the stirrup from his grasp whom he had overthrown, and killed him also with his sword as he lay among the horse's feet. The story seems romantic, but this was the age of romantic exploit; and it must be remembered that Bruce was armed cap-a-pie, and the assailants were half-clad mountaineers. Barbour adds the following circumstances, highly characteristic of the sentiments of chivalry. Mac-Naughton, a baron of Cowal, pointed out to the Lord of Lorn the deeds of valour which Bruce performed in this memorable retreat, with the highest expressions of admiration. 'It seems to give thee pleasure,' said Lorn, 'that he makes such havoc among our friends.'—'Not so, by my faith,' replied Mac-Naughton; 'but be he friend or foe who achieves high deeds of chivalry, men should bear faithful witness to his valour; and never have I heard of one, who, by his knightly feats, has extricated himself from such dangers as have this day surrounded Bruce.'"—*Scott*.

255. *Columba*: see note on line 397.

280-4. Barcaldine Castle is on Loch Cresan, about 8 miles N.W. of Dunstaffnage; Kinloch-Alline Castle is at the head of Loch Alline. Both men are called by the names of their estates (see note on l. 10); but Murthok and Dermid are personal names, not names of places.

290-2. *but...withstood*: if every chief had not withstood.

294-9. *Bara*: Barra, southernmost of the Outer Hebrides. For the other places named see the map facing the title-page. *thane*: lord. *Clan Gillian*: the Clan Maclean.

300. *broadsword*: the Highland claymore, a sword with a broad blade, designed for cutting, and not for thrusting.

glance: flash.

313. *for*: instead of.

XV—XVIII. *Lorn demands vengeance on Robert Bruce for Comyn's murder; Ronald resists; their followers prepare to fight.*

326. *still*; here used as a noun = stillness.

329. *Sworder*: a Roman gladiator; compare "a Roman sworder," Shakespeare, 2 *Henry VI*, IV. I. 135. Scott refers to some statue of a gladiator with drawn sword.

XIX—XX. *Argentine in the name of Edward I claims the Bruces as traitors.*

342. *knightly exercise*: tournaments.

363. *liege lord**: lord to whom they had sworn fealty.

XXI—XXIV. *The Abbot of Iona arrives; Lorn asks him to decide the Bruce's fate.*

397. *Columba*: St Columba, coming from Ireland with twelve followers about 563 A.D., formed a monastic community at Iona, and converted the heathen Picts to Christianity. Iona was thenceforward the great religious centre of the Picts until the Norsemen ravaged it and slew the monks in 806 A.D. The *Martyrs' Bay* on the east of the island is the place where the monks are said to have been put to death. *Columba's stone*: probably the stone which Columba used instead of a pillow; after his death it was set up beside his grave. A stone which is said to be this identical pillow of St Columba is still shewn at Iona.

399. *Dun-Y*: the highest hill in Iona.

401. *girth*: the enclosure of the monastery, as opposed to the open *wold**. There are said to have been 360 crosses on the island; all but two were destroyed or removed shortly after the Reformation. They are here represented as being used as stations at which the monks said their prayers.

404. *Aves*: the *Ave Maria* consists of Gabriel's and Elisabeth's salutations to the Virgin (St Luke i. 28 and 42).

407. *doom*: judgment.

411. *black-stoled*: robed in black. See *stole* in the Glossary.

422. *rood**: cross.

426. *amice* here probably means a hood. Again Scott dwells on the points of colour in the picture.

431. *Benedicite!* Bless ye (the Lord)!—a common salutation of a priest on entering an assembly.

443. *ban**: a curse.

XXV. Ronald pleads for Bruce; Lorn refuses him Edith's hand.

457. =prayed Lorn for mercy.

460. "It was anciently customary in the Highlands to bring the bride to the house of the husband."—*Scott*.

464. *Clifford*: Sir Robert Clifford, who is represented in III. 179 and v. xxiii–xxxii as holding Turnberry Castle and as being slain there; he was really killed at Bannockburn.

XXVI–XXVII. Argentine urges Edward's claims in a manner which makes Ronald and Torquil openly side with Bruce.

477–8. "William Wallace, who had oft-times set Scotland in great trouble, was taken and brought to London, with great numbers of men and women wondering upon him. He was lodged in the house of William Delect, a citizen of London, in Fenchurch-street. On the morrow, being the eve of St Bartholomew, he was brought on horseback to Westminster, John Legrave and Jeffrey, knights, the mayor, sheriffs, and aldermen of London, and many others, both on horseback and on foot, accompanying him; and in the great hall at Westminster, he being placed on the south bench, crowned with laurel, for that he had said in times past that he ought to bear a crown in that hall, as it was commonly reported; and being appeached for a traitor by Sir Peter Malorie, the king's justice, he answered, that he was never traitor to the king of England; but for other things whereof he was accused he confessed them; and was after headed and quartered."—*Stow's Chronicle*, p. 209, quoted by Scott.

481–4. De la Haye and Somerville were not executed, as Scott explains in the following note:—"When these lines were written, the author was remote from the means of correcting his indistinct recollection concerning the individual fate of Bruce's followers, after the battle of Methven. Hugh de la Haye, and Thomas Somerville of Lintoun and Cowdally, ancestor of Lord Somerville, were both made prisoners at that defeat, but neither was executed.

"Sir Nigel Bruce was the younger brother of Robert, to whom he committed the charge of his wife and daughter, Marjorie, and the defence of his strong castle of Kildrummie, near the head of the Don, in Aberdeenshire. Kildrummie long resisted the arms of the Earls of Lancaster and Hereford, until the magazine was treacherously burnt. The garrison was then compelled to surrender at discretion, and Nigel Bruce, a youth remarkable for personal beauty, as well as for gallantry, fell into the hands of the unrelenting Edward. He was tried by a special commission at Berwick, was condemned and executed.

"Christopher Seatoun shared the same unfortunate fate. He also was distinguished by personal valour, and signalized himself in the fatal battle of Methven. Robert Bruce adventured his person in that battle like a knight of romance. He dismounted Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, but was in his turn dismounted by Sir Philip Mowbray. In this emergence Seatoun came to his aid, and remounted him. Langtoft mentions, that in this battle the Scottish wore white surplices, or shirts, over their armour, that those of rank might not be known. In this manner both Bruce and Seatoun escaped. But the latter was afterwards betrayed to the English, through means, according to Barbour, of one Mac-Nab, 'a disciple of Judas,' in whom the unfortunate knight reposed entire confidence. There was some peculiarity respecting his punishment; because, according to Matthew of Westminster, he was considered not as a Scottish subject, but an Englishman. He was therefore taken to Dumfries, where he was tried, condemned, and executed for the murder of a soldier, slain by him. His brother, John de Seton, had the same fate at Newcastle; both were considered as accomplices in the slaughter of Comyn, but in what manner they were particularly accessory to that deed does not appear.

"The fate of Sir Simon Frazer or Frizel, ancestor of the family of Lovat, is dwelt upon at great length, and with savage exultation, by the English historians. This knight, who was renowned for personal gallantry and high deeds of chivalry, was also made prisoner, after a gallant defence, in the battle of Methven." Scott proceeds to quote a contemporary ballad and a chronicle describing Fraser's execution at London; he was hung, drawn, and quartered, and his head "set at London-bridge upon a spear."

489. *Leopard*: Edward I,—Ronald in giving him this name refers to the leopards in the coat-of-arms of England.

491. *Athole*: "John de Strathbogie, Earl of Athole, had attempted to escape out of the kingdom, but a storm cast him upon the coast,

when he was taken, sent to London, and executed, with circumstances of great barbarity, being first half strangled, then let down from the gallows while yet alive, barbarously dismembered, and his body burnt. It may surprise the reader to learn, that this was a *mitigated* punishment; for in respect that his mother was a grand-daughter of King John, by his natural son Richard, he was not drawn on a sledge to execution, 'that point was forgiven,' and he made the passage on horseback. Matthew of Westminster tells us that King Edward, then extremely ill, received great ease from the news that his relative was apprehended. '*Quo audito, Rex Angliæ, etsi gravissimo morbo tunc langueret, levius tamen tulit dolorem*¹.' To this singular expression the text alludes."—*Scott*.

494. "This alludes to a passage in Barbour, singularly expressive of the vindictive spirit of Edward I. The prisoners taken at the castle of Kildrummie had surrendered upon condition that they should be at King Edward's disposal. 'But his will,' says Barbour, 'was always evil towards Scottishmen.' The news of the surrender of Kildrummie arrived when he was in his mortal sickness at Burgh-upon-Sands.

'And when he to the death was near,

The folk that at Kyldromy wer

Come with prisoners that they had tane,

And syne² to the king are gane.

² then.

And for to comfort him they tauld

How they the castell to them yauld³;

³ yielded.

And how they till⁴ his will were brought,

⁴ to.

To do off⁵ that whatever he thought;

⁵ to do with.

And ask'd what men should off them do.

Then look'd he angrily them to,

He said, grinning, 'HANGIS AND DRAWIS⁶.'

⁶ hang and draw them.

That was wonder of sic saws⁷,

⁷ such sayings.

That he, that to the death was near,

Should answer upon sic maner,

Forouten moaning⁸ and mercy;

⁸ without lamenting.

How might he trust on him⁹ to cry

⁹ God.

That sooth-fastly dooms all thing,

To have mercy for his crying

Off him that, throw his felony¹⁰,

¹⁰ cruelty.
¹¹ to such a degree.

Into sic point¹¹ had no mercy?"—*Scott*.

¹ 'Though the king of England was then languishing under a very grievous sickness, yet he found the pain easier to bear after hearing the news.'

495-6. 'My challenge (= *gage**) is ready to maintain the justice of (= *prove*) the strife I wage.'

500. *Woden*: the chief of the Scandinavian gods; his name is preserved in *Wednesday*. "The MacLeods, and most other distinguished Hebridean families, were of Scandinavian extraction, and some were late or imperfect converts to Christianity. The family names of Torquil, Thormod, &c., are all Norwegian."—*Scott*.

502. *attainted*: condemned (as a traitor).

505. *couch**: a horseman *couched* his lance before he charged: that is, fixed it horizontally in a 'rest' or socket so that it might pierce the enemy. See VI. 366, 591, 640, 830, 871.

506. *Randolph*: see note on VI. 25.

XXVIII—XXXII. The Abbot, after hearing Bruce's reply to his accusers, is about to excommunicate him, when, mastered by a sudden inspiration, instead of cursing he blesses him, and immediately returns to Iona.

525. *canons**: the laws of the Church.

527. *anathema*: curse.

538. *devoted**: accursed.

539. *scutcheon**: a painted shield bearing the dead man's coat-of-arms.

548. *boots*: profits.

552-4. See line 214 and note.

563. *thrall*: thralldom, slavery.

564. *cope, stole**: vestments worn by priests.

565. *requiem**: mass said for the repose of the dead.

568. "Bruce uniformly professed, and probably felt, compunction for having violated the sanctuary of the church by the slaughter of Comyn; and finally, in his last hours, in testimony of his faith, penitence, and zeal, he requested James Lord Douglas to carry his heart to Jerusalem, to be there deposited in the Holy Sepulchre."—*Scott*.

576. *shrift*: confession.

587. *undistinguish'd*: indistinct.

590. "So soon as the notice of Comyn's slaughter reached Rome, Bruce and his adherents were excommunicated. It was published first by the Archbishop of York, and renewed at different times, particularly by Lambyrton, Bishop of St Andrews, in 1308; but it does not appear

to have answered the purpose which the English monarch expected. Indeed, for reasons which it may be difficult to trace, the thunders of Rome descended upon the Scottish mountains with less effect than in more fertile countries. Probably the comparative poverty of the benefices occasioned that fewer foreign clergy settled in Scotland; and the interests of the native churchmen were linked with that of their country. Many of the Scottish prelates, Lambyrton the primate particularly, declared for Bruce, while he was yet under the ban of the church, although he afterwards again changed sides."—*Scott*.

593. *Midianite*: Balaam, who, when asked to curse the Israelites, blessed them (Numbers xxiii, xxiv).

596. Scott points out that Barbour introduces, instead of the Abbot, an Irish prophethess, who not only predicted Bruce's good fortune as he left the island of Rachrin, but sent her two sons along with him, to ensure her own family a share in it.

611. *a hunted wanderer*: "This is not metaphorical. The echoes of Scotland did actually

———'ring

With the bloodhounds that bayed for her fugitive king.'

A very curious and romantic tale is told by Barbour upon this subject, which may be abridged as follows:—

"When Bruce had again got footing in Scotland in the spring of 1307, he continued to be in a very weak and precarious condition, gaining, indeed, occasional advantages, but obliged to fly before his enemies whenever they assembled in force. Upon one occasion, while he was lying with a small party in the wilds of Cumnock, in Ayrshire, Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, with his inveterate foe, John of Lorn, came against him suddenly with eight hundred Highlanders, besides a large body of men-at-arms. They brought with them a slough-dog, or bloodhound, which, some say, had been once a favourite with the Bruce himself, and therefore was least likely to lose the trace.

"Bruce, whose force was under four hundred men, continued to make head against the cavalry, till the men of Lorn had nearly cut off his retreat. Perceiving the danger of his situation, he divided his force into three parts, appointed a place of rendezvous, and commanded them to retreat by different routes. But when John of Lorn arrived at the spot where they divided, he caused the hound to be put upon the track, which immediately directed him to the pursuit of the party which Bruce headed. This, therefore, Lorn pursued with his whole force, paying no attention to the others. The king again subdivided his small body into

three parts, and with the same result, for the pursuers attached themselves exclusively to that which he led in person. He then caused his followers to disperse, and retained only his foster-brother in his company. The slough-dog followed the trace, and, neglecting the others, attached himself and his attendants to pursuit of the king. Lorn became convinced that his enemy was nearly in his power, and detached five of his most active attendants to follow him, and interrupt his flight. They did so with all the agility of mountaineers. 'What aid wilt thou make?' said Bruce to his single attendant, when he saw the five men gain ground on him. 'The best I can,' replied his foster-brother. 'Then,' said Bruce, 'here I make my stand.' The five pursuers came up fast. The king took three to himself, leaving the other two to his foster-brother. He slew the first who encountered him; but observing his foster-brother hard pressed, he sprung to his assistance, and despatched one of his assailants. Leaving him to deal with the survivor, he returned upon the other two, both of whom he slew before his foster-brother had despatched his single antagonist. When this hard encounter was over, with a courtesy, which in the whole work marks Bruce's character, he thanked his foster-brother for his aid. 'It likes you to say so,' answered his follower; 'but you yourself slew four of the five.'—'True,' said the king, 'but only because I had better opportunity than you. They were not apprehensive of me when they saw me encounter three, so I had a moment's time to spring to thy aid, and to return equally unexpectedly upon my own opponents.'

"In the meanwhile Lorn's party approached rapidly, and the king and his foster-brother betook themselves to a neighbouring wood. Here they sat down, for Bruce was exhausted by fatigue, until the cry of the slough-hound came so near, that his foster-brother entreated Bruce to provide for his safety by retreating further. 'I have heard,' answered the king, 'that whosoever will wade a bow-shot length down a running stream, shall make the slough-hound lose scent.—Let us try the experiment, for were yon devilish hound silenced, I should care little for the rest.'

"Lorn in the meanwhile advanced, and found the bodies of his slain vassals, over whom he made his moan, and threatened the most deadly vengeance. Then he followed the hound to the side of the brook, down which the king had waded a great way. Here the hound was at fault, and John of Lorn, after long attempting in vain to recover Bruce's trace, relinquished the pursuit.

" 'Others,' says Barbour, 'affirm, that upon this occasion the king's

life was saved by an excellent archer who accompanied him, and who perceiving they would be finally taken by means of the bloodhound, hid himself in a thicket, and shot him with an arrow. In which way,' adds the metrical biographer, 'this escape happened I am uncertain, but at that brook the king escaped from his pursuers.'"—*Scott*.

CANTO III.

Introduction. (Lines 1-9.) Compare this introductory stanza with II. 324-7, where the simile is drawn from the lull which *precedes* the thunderclap.

II—III. Ronald vainly urges Lorn to take Bruce's side.

- 20. *oriel**: a recessed window in a hall.
- 29. *imbru'd*: stained.
- 31. *rede*: advice; compare I. 117 and note.
- 36. *wreak*: revenge.

IV. Edith has escaped in the Abbot's ship. Lorn despatches Cormac Doil after her.

- 48. *meed*: reward.
- 65. *pirate*: "a sort of persons common in the isles, as may be easily believed, until the introduction of civil polity."—*Scott*.

V—VII. Argentine gives Bruce his gage, and with Lorn quits the castle.

- 76. *impotent of ire* qualifies *Lorn's*; it means 'unable to control his rage' (Latin *irae impotens*).
- 78. *train*: retinue, followers.
- 92. *soldier*: used as an adjective = 'soldierly.'
- 93. *helm**: helmet. To give a man your glove was to challenge him to a duel; he put the glove in his hat until a fitting opportunity was found. So Henry and Williams exchange gloves in Shakespeare's *Henry V*, IV. 1.
- 95. *still*: ever.

VIII—XI. *Ronald and Torquil do homage to Bruce and persuade him to take refuge with them in Skye; Edward is to convey Isabel back to Ireland.*

156. *falchion**: sword.

163. *Falkirk's woes*: Scott says, "I have followed the vulgar and inaccurate tradition, that Bruce fought against Wallace and the array of Scotland at the fatal battle of Falkirk. The story, which seems to have no better authority than that of Blind Harry¹, bears, that having made much slaughter during the engagement, he sat down to dine with the conquerors without washing the filthy witness from his hands.

'Fasting he was and had been in great need,
 Blooded were all his weapons and his weed²;
 Southeron lords scorned him in terms rude,
 And said, Behold yon Scot eats his own blood.
 Then rued he sore, for reason had be known,
 That blood and land alike should be his own:
 With them he long was, ere he got away,
 But contrair Scots he fought not from that day.'

The account given by most of our historians of the conversation between Bruce and Wallace over the Carron river is equally apocryphal. There is full evidence that Bruce was not at that time on the English side, nor present at the battle of Falkirk; nay, that he acted as a guardian of Scotland, along with John Comyn, in the name of Baliol, and in opposition to the English. He was the grandson of the competitor³, with whom he has been sometimes confounded. Lord Hailes has well described, and in some degree apologized for, the earlier part of his life.—'His grandfather, the competitor, had patiently acquiesced in the award of Edward. His father, yielding to the times, had served under the English banners. But young Bruce had more ambition, and a more restless spirit. In his earlier years he acted upon no regular plan. By turns the partisan of Edward, and the vicegerent of Baliol, he seems to have forgotten or stifled his pretensions to the crown. But his character developed itself by degrees, and in maturer age became firm and consistent.'"

176. *Carrick's kindred shore*: see note on II. 150.

¹ The author of a metrical life of Wallace written about 1460.

² clothes.

³ For the crown of Scotland in 1292, when Edward I awarded it to Baliol.

178. *burly fare*: hearty feasting.
 179. *Clifford*: see II. 464 and note.
 182. *Lennox*: the Earl of Lennox, mentioned in the note on II.
 190. *head*: a force, a body of followers.
 191. *Liege**: lord.
 205. *Sleate* or *Sleat*: the south-east peninsula of Skye.
 224. *winged*: the outlying promontories of this island seem to spread out like a bird's wings; moreover some say that the name *Skye* means 'a wing.'

XII—XVII. Robert Bruce and Ronald on reaching Skye land to shoot deer. Description of the scenery of Loch Coriskin.

The course of Bruce's adventures in this and the next Canto should be followed on the map facing the title-page.

228-9. They had sailed so far northwards that Mull was scarcely visible and the hills of Ardnamurchan were blue in the distance.

231. *to strike the galley's yard*: to furl the sail by lowering the yard to which it was attached.

246. *Strathnardill* or *Strath-Aird* is the promontory between Loch Scavigh and Loch Slapin. The following description is taken from the diary which Scott kept on his visit to Skye in August 1814:—"The western coast of Sky is highly romantic, and at the same time displays a richness of vegetation in the lower grounds to which we have hitherto been strangers. We passed three salt-water lochs, and about 11 o'clock opened Loch Slavig. We were now under the western termination of the high ridge of mountains called Cuillen, or Quillin, or Coolin, whose weatherbeaten and serrated peaks we had admired at a distance from Dunvegan. They sunk here upon the sea, but with the same bold and peremptory aspect which their distant appearance indicated. They appeared to consist of precipitous sheets of native rock, down which the torrents were leaping in a hundred lines of foam. The tops of the ridge, apparently inaccessible to human foot, were rent and split into the most tremendous pinnacles. Towards the base of these bare and precipitous crags the ground, enriched by the soil washed down from them, is comparatively verdant and productive."

The visit to Lake Coriskin is thus described:—"We lost sight of the sea almost immediately after we had climbed over a low ridge of crags, and were surrounded by mountains of naked rock, of

the boldest and most precipitous character. The ground on which we walked was the margin of a lake, which seemed to have sustained the constant ravage of torrents from these rude neighbours. The shores consisted of huge strata of naked granite, here and there intermixed with bogs and heaps of gravel and sand piled in the empty watercourses. Vegetation there was little or none; and the mountains rose so perpendicularly from the water edge, that Borrowdale, or even Glencoe, is a jest to them. We proceeded a mile and a half up this deep, dark, and solitary lake, which was about two miles long, half a mile broad, and is, as we learned, of extreme depth. The murky vapours which enveloped the mountain ridges, obliged us by assuming a thousand varied shapes, changing their drapery into all sorts of forms, and sometimes clearing off all together. It is true, the mist made us pay the penalty by some heavy and downright showers, from the frequency of which a Highland boy, whom we brought from the farm, told us the lake was popularly called the Water-kettle. The proper name is Loch Corriskin¹, from the deep corrie, or hollow, in the mountains of Cuillin, which affords the basin for this wonderful sheet of water. It is as exquisite a savage scene as Loch Katrine is a scene of romantic beauty. After having penetrated so far as distinctly to observe the termination of the lake under an immense precipice, which rises abruptly from the water, we returned, and often stopped to admire the ravages which storms must have made in these recesses, where all human witnesses were driven to places of more shelter and security. Stones or rather large masses and fragments of rocks of a composite kind, perfectly different from the strata of the lake, were scattered upon the bare rocky beach, in the strangest and most precarious situations, as if abandoned by the torrents which had borne them down from above. Some lay loose and tottering upon the ledges of the natural rock, with so little security that the slightest push moved them, though their weight might exceed many tons. These detached rocks, or stones, were chiefly what is called plum-pudding stones. The bare rocks, which formed the shore of the lakes, were a species of granite. The opposite side of the lake seemed quite pathless and inaccessible, as a huge mountain, one of the detached ridges of the Cuillin hills, sinks in a profound and perpendicular precipice down to the water. On the left-hand side, which we traversed, rose a higher and equally inaccessible mountain, the top of which strongly resembled the shivered crater of an exhausted volcano.

¹ Now usually spelt Coruisk.

I never saw a spot in which there was less appearance of vegetation of any kind. The eye rested on nothing but barren and naked crags, and the rocks on which we walked by the side of the loch were as bare as the pavements of Cheapside. There are one or two small islets in the loch, which seem to bear juniper, or some such low bushy shrub. Upon the whole, though I have seen many scenes of more extensive desolation, I never witnessed any in which it pressed more deeply upon the eye and the heart than at Loch Corriskin; at the same time that its grandeur elevated and redeemed it from the wild and dreary character of utter barrenness."—*Scott*.

272. *by my halidome**: by my faith. We may doubt whether Bruce would have found anything to admire in the scenery; it was only in Scott's own days that men began to discover 'the sublimity in barrenness.'

289-91. There are several Benmores in Scotland (the name means 'great mountain'), but Benmore in Perthshire, south of Loch Dochart (see note on II. 206), is here meant. *Glencroe* is a valley running down to the head of Loch Long from the north-west. *Cruchan-Ben* (as Barbour calls it) or Ben Cruachan is between Lochs Etive and Awe: see map.

315. *Druid's stone*: the loggan-stones or rocking-stones were formerly regarded as the work of the Druids; it is now thought that they may be a result of natural causes.

338. *griesly**: grisly, terrible.

342. *Cuchullin*: a hero of the ancient Celtic legends. It is not probable that Coolin is named from him.

351. *Maid's*: McLeod's Maidens, on the west coast of Skye, are "three spires of rock rising sheer out of the sea, formed like women, around whose feet the foaming wreaths are continually forming, floating, and disappearing."—Smith's *Summer in Skye*.

352. *Nurse*: in the garden of Dunvegan Castle is a pretty cascade "called Rorie More's Nurse, because he loved to be lulled to sleep by the sound of it."—Scott's *Diary*.

354. *Corryvreckin*: "In the passage or sound between Scorba and the extremity of Jura is a terrible run of tide, which, contending with the sunk rocks and islets of that foul channel, occasions the succession of whirlpools called the Gulf of Corrievreckan."—Scott's *Diary*. The "Hag's hood" is formed by the sheets of spray thrown up in storms.

XVIII—XXVII. They encounter five strangers, and accept their offer of hospitality.

393. *shafts*: arrows.

398. *the strangers*: Scott tells us that the story of Bruce's meeting the banditti is copied with some alterations from an incident narrated by Barbour. It is a sequel to the adventure of the bloodhound, described in the note on II. 611. That narrative broke off leaving Bruce escaped from his pursuers, but worn with fatigue and having no attendant but his foster-brother. In the midst of a moor they met three men, armed, and one of them carrying a wether on his neck; they said they were seeking Bruce. The king offered to lead them to him, but being suspicious, made them walk before him. At night the three men, who were Bruce's foes and had recognised him, entered a cottage and killed the wether. Bruce insisted, as in the poem, on having his fire and his meal apart, and after eating, set his foster-brother to watch while he slept. But his foster-brother was overcome by drowsiness, and Bruce awoke just in time to find the three men falling on him with drawn swords. They killed the foster-brother and would have killed the king, but for his armour; but he fought so stoutly that "the three traitors he has slain, through God's grace and his manhood."

405. *brogue*: rough shoes of untanned leather; *trews*: a Highlander's trousers made of tartan.

414. *caitiffs**: wretches.

427. *fallow** *deer*: red deer.

431. *ken**: know.

441. *blazon red*: the red cross of England.

483-4. The *lute* was a stringed instrument like a guitar, played by the fingers; the *rote* was of two sorts, one a harp played by a quill, the other a kind of fiddle; the *viol* was like a violin, but rather larger.

497. *listed** *think*: cared to think.

566. *selle**: seat. We must suppose that before her brothers had incurred the enmity of Edward I she had been present at a tournament at the royal manor-house of Woodstock, near Oxford, and that Ronald had won the prize. From IV. 381-4 and 622 we may add the particulars that Ronald fought in disguise under the title of Champion of the Rock and that Isabel presided at the tournament and awarded the prizes.

589. *Scotland's cross*: the white cross of St Andrew, formed of two diagonal arms. See IV. 321, V. 777-8.

597. *mew*: the sea-mew or gull.

XXVIII—XXXII. The strangers fall on them when asleep, and kill Ronald's page, but are themselves slain by Bruce and Ronald, who bring away with them a dumb minstrel, the strangers' captive.

600-1. 'The watch necessary for their safety was a harder task to Allan.'

603. *bickering*: flickering, rising and falling.

613. *Dan**: Sir—a title generally given to monks.

617. *twilight-flake*: the broken reflections (flakes) of the morning light on the waves of the lake.

630. *Strathaird's enchanted cell*: Strathaird is the promontory between Lochs Scavigh and Slapin, and the cave is on its eastern shore. "The first entrance to this celebrated cave is rude and unpromising; but the light of the torches with which we were provided was soon reflected from the roof, floor, and walls, which seem as if they were sheeted with marble, partly smooth, partly rough with frostwork and rustic ornaments, and partly seeming to be wrought into statuary. The floor forms a steep and difficult ascent, and might be fancifully compared to a sheet of water, which, while it rushed whitening and foaming down a declivity, had been suddenly arrested and consolidated by the spell of an enchanter. Upon attaining the summit of this ascent the cave opens into a splendid gallery, adorned with the most dazzling crystallizations, and finally descends with rapidity to the brink of a pool of the most limpid water, about four or five yards broad. There opens beyond this pool a portal arch, formed by two columns of white spar, with beautiful chasing upon the sides, which promises a continuation of the cave. One of our sailors swam across, for there is no other mode of passing, and informed us (as indeed we partly saw by the light he carried) that the enchantment of Macalister's cave terminates with this portal, a little beyond which there was only a rude cavern, speedily choked with stones and earth. But the pool, on the brink of which we stood, surrounded by the most fanciful mouldings, in a substance resembling white marble, and distinguished by the depth and purity of its waters, might have been the bathing grotto of a naiad. The groups of combined figures projecting, or embossed, by which the pool is surrounded, are exquisitely elegant and fanciful. A statuary might catch beautiful hints from the singular and romantic disposition of those stalactites. There is scarce a form or group on which active fancy may

not trace figures or grotesque ornaments, which have been gradually moulded in this cavern by the dropping of the calcareous water hardening into petrifications."—*Scott*. The stalactites which once formed the great beauty of the cave are said to have been destroyed by tourists.

662. 'Never needs to strike twice.'

714. *wroke*: avenged; compare III. 36.

721. *Donagaile*: on the shore of Morven. "Pass the ruins of a small fortalice, called Donagaile, situated, as usual, on a precipice overhanging the sea."—*Scott's Diary*.

CANTO IV.

Introduction. (Lines 1–27.) *The stern grandeur of the scenery of Skye.*

2. *Caledon* or *Caledonia*: an ancient name of Scotland.

21–4. *Rannoch's lakes*: Loch Rannoch, in the north-west of Perthshire, receives the waters of several other lakes. The Moor of Rannoch (south-west of the loch) is a dreary waste. *Glencoe* (see map) is about 15 miles west of Loch Rannoch; it is "the most dreary and melancholy of all the Scotch passes" (*Macaulay*). *Loch Eribol* is about 15 miles south-east of Cape Wrath, "running up into a wild and barren scene of crags and hills."—*Scott's Diary*.

II—VI. Bruce and Ronald are met by Edward Bruce, who bears the tidings that their cause is prospering and Edward I is dead.

42. *Lennox*: see III. 182 and note.

45–6. *Teviotdale*: the Teviot flows through Roxburghshire; Douglasdale is in the south of Lanarkshire.

64. "The generosity which does justice to the character of an enemy often marks Bruce's sentiments, as recorded by the faithful Barbour. He seldom mentions a fallen enemy without praising such good characters as he might possess." Scott proceeds to give an instance.—Shortly after Bruce landed in Carrick in 1307 the English governor of Ayr engaged a wealthy yeoman, who had hitherto been a follower of Bruce, to undertake the task of assassinating him. Shortly after he learned this treachery the king, attended only by his page, met the traitor accompanied by two of his sons. They approached him with their wonted familiarity, but Bruce, taking the page's bow and arrow,

commanded them to keep at a distance. As they still pressed forward with professions of zeal for his person and service, he, after a second warning, shot the father with the arrow; and being assaulted successively by the two sons, despatched first one, who was armed with an axe, then as the other charged him with the spear, avoided the thrust, struck the head from the spear, and cleft the skull of the assassin with a blow of his two-handed sword. When the page spoke of their "felony and pride," the king said

"They had been worthy men all three
Had they not been full of treason:
But that made their confusion."

73. *Croydon monks*: why *Croydon* monks should be mentioned it is hard to say: we know of no great monastery at *Croydon*, although there was a palace of the Archbishop of Canterbury there.

78. "In 1306 Bruce, as we have seen, was utterly expelled from Scotland: yet in the conclusion of the same year Bruce was again in arms and formidable; and in 1307, Edward, though exhausted by a long and wasting malady, put himself at the head of the army destined to destroy him utterly. This was, perhaps, partly in consequence of a vow which he had taken upon him, with all the pomp of chivalry, upon the day in which he dubbed his son a knight. But even his spirit of vengeance was unable to restore his exhausted strength. He reached Burgh-upon-Sands, a petty village of Cumberland, on the shores of the Solway Firth, and there, 6th July, 1307, expired in sight of the detested and devoted country of Scotland. His dying injunctions to his son required him to continue the Scottish war, and never to recall Gaveston. Edward II disobeyed both charges. Yet, more to mark his animosity, the dying monarch ordered his bones to be carried with the invading army. Froissart, who probably had the authority of eyewitnesses, has given us the following account of this remarkable charge:—

"In the said forest, the old King Robert of Scotland dyd kepe hymselfe, whan Kyng Edward the Fyrst conquered nygh all Scotland; for he was so often chased, that none durst loge him in castell, nor fortresse, for feare of the said Kyng.

"And ever whan the King was returned into England, than he would gather together agayn his people, and conquere townes, castells, and fortresses, iuste to Berwick, some by battle, and some by fair speech and love; and when the said King Edward heard thereof, than would he assemble his power, and wyn the realme of Scotland again; thus the chance went between these two foresaid Kings. It was showed me,

how that this King Robert wan and lost his realme v. times. So this continued till the said King Edward died at Berwick: and when he saw that he should die, he called before him his eldest son, who was King after him, and there, before all the barones, he caused him to swear, that as soon as he were dead, that he should take his body, and boyle it in a cauldron, till the flesh departed clean from the bones, and than to bury the flesh, and keep still the bones; and that as often as the Scotts should rebell against him, he should assemble the people against them, and carry with him the bones of his father; for he believed verily, that if they had his bones with them, that the Scotts should never attain any victory against them. The which thing was not accomplished, for when the King died his son carried him to London.'—Berners' Translation of Froissart's *Chronicle*.

"Edward's commands were not obeyed, for he was interred in Westminster Abbey, with the appropriate inscription:—

'EDWARDUS PRIMUS SCOTORUM MALLEUS HIC EST.

PACTUM SERVA¹.'

"Yet some steps seem to have been taken towards rendering his body capable of occasional transportation, for it was exquisitely embalmed, as was ascertained when his tomb was opened some years ago. Edward II judged wisely in not carrying the dead body of his father into Scotland, since he would not obey his living counsels.

"It ought to be observed, that though the order of the incidents is reversed in the poem, yet, in point of historical accuracy, Bruce had landed in Scotland, and obtained some successes of consequence before the death of Edward I."—*Scott*.

84. *lair**: ground.

94. The generous sentiments here attributed to Bruce were considered by some to discredit the poet as a Scotchman: "To represent the just and generous Robert feeling an instant's compassion for the sudden fate of a miscreant like this, is, we are compelled to say it, so monstrous, and in a *Scottish* poet, so unnatural a violation of truth and decency, not to say patriotism, that we are really astonished that the author could have conceived the idea, much more that he could suffer his pen to record it."—*Critical Review*, 1815. See also p. xx.

104. *De la Haye*: son of the De la Haye mentioned in II. 217 and 481.

116. *Long Island* is the name given to the chain of islands other-

¹ 'Here lies Edward I the Hammer of the Scots. Keep faith'—(this was Edward's motto).

wise called the Outer Hebrides; North and South Uist are two of these islands. The Minche or Minch is the sound separating the Long Island from the mainland and Skye.

121. *hest*: behest, command.

132-5. *coronach*: a Highland lamentation at a funeral. The mourners uttered inarticulate wailings, and at intervals expressed the praises of the deceased and the loss the clan would sustain by his death. *piibroch*: the bagpipes: see note on l. 112.

VII—XIII. *The voyage to Arran. On their way they summon the islands to arms.*

Note the effect as of lively and graceful motion produced in the lines describing the actual voyage (the earlier parts of Stanzas vii, ix, x, xi) by the more frequent introduction of unaccented syllables and of short lines. See p. xxix.

147. *Ben-na-darch*: a hill at the head of Loch Slapin.

161-2. *Dunscaith* is a castle and *Cavilgarriagh* a headland in Sleat. For the other places mentioned in lines 158-65 see the map.

168. *targe*: a small, round shield.

175. *Canna's tower*: on the island of Canna "in a pretty bay opening towards the east there is a lofty and slender rock detached from the shore. Upon the summit are the ruins of a very small tower, scarcely accessible by a steep and precipitous path. Here it is said one of the kings, or Lord of the Isles, confined a beautiful lady, of whom he was jealous. The ruins are of course haunted by her restless spirit, and many romantic stories are told by the aged people of the island concerning her fate in life, and her appearances after death."—*Scott*.

217. *Ronin*: "popularly called Rum, a name which a poet may be pardoned for avoiding if possible."—*Scott*. It is a rough, mountainous island, with scarcely any arable land, but it abounded in deer; hence the inhabitants were hunters (220).

225. *Scooreigg*: a high peak in the centre of the island of Eigg. *Scoor* or *scur* in Gaelic means a sharp rock.

229. *ocean-cave*: *Scott's* visit is thus described in his *Diary*: "We manned the boat, and rowed along the shore of Eigg in quest of a cavern, which had been the memorable scene of a horrid feudal vengeance. We had rounded more than half the island, admiring the entrance of many a bold natural cave, which its rocks exhibited, without finding that which we sought, until we procured a guide. Nor, indeed,

was it surprising that it should have escaped the search of strangers, as there are no outward indications more than might distinguish the entrance of a fox-earth. This noted cave has a very narrow opening, through which one can hardly creep on his knees and hands. It rises steep and lofty within, and runs into the bowels of the rock to the depth of 255 measured feet; the height at the entrance may be about three feet, but rises within to eighteen or twenty, and the breadth may vary in the same proportion. The rude and stony bottom of this cave is strewn with the bones of men, women, and children, the sad relics of the ancient inhabitants of the island, 200 in number, who were slain on the following occasion:—The Mac-Donalds of the Isle of Eigg, a people dependant on Clan-Ronald, had done some injury to the Laird of Mac-Leod. The tradition of the isle says, that it was by a personal attack on the chieftain, in which his back was broken. But that of the other isles bears, more probably, that the injury was offered to two or three of the Mac-Leods, who, landing upon Eigg, and using some freedom were seized by the islanders, bound hand and foot, and turned adrift in a boat, which the winds and waves safely conducted to Skye. To avenge the offence given, Mac-Leod sailed with such a body of men as rendered resistance hopeless. The natives, fearing his vengeance, concealed themselves in this cavern, and, after a strict search, the Mac-Leods went on board their galleys, after doing what mischief they could, concluding the inhabitants had left the isle, and betaken themselves to the Long Island, or some of Clan-Ronald's other possessions. But next morning they espied from the vessels a man upon the island, and immediately landing again, they traced his retreat by the marks of his footsteps, a light snow being unhappily on the ground. Mac-Leod then surrounded the cavern, summoned the subterranean garrison, and demanded that the individuals who had offended him should be delivered up to him. This was peremptorily refused. The chieftain then caused his people to divert the course of a rill of water, which, falling over the entrance of the cave, would have prevented his purposed vengeance. He then kindled at the entrance of the cavern a huge fire, composed of turf and fern, and maintained it with unrelenting assiduity, until all within were destroyed by suffocation. The date of this dreadful deed must have been recent, if one may judge from the fresh appearance of those relics I brought off, in spite of the prejudice of our sailors, a skull from among the numerous specimens of mortality which the cavern afforded."

235. *plain**: wailing.

248. *Staffia*: "The stupendous columns which form the sides of the

cave, the depth and strength of the tide which rolls its deep and heavy swell up to the extremity of the vault—the variety of tints formed by white, crimson, and yellow stalactites, or petrifications, which occupy the vacancies between the base of the broken pillars which form the roof, and intersect them with a rich, curious, and variegated chasing, occupying each interstice—the corresponding variety below water, where the ocean rolls over a dark-red or violet-coloured rock, from which, as from a base, the basaltic columns arise—the tremendous noise of the swelling tide, mingling with the deep-toned echoes of the vault,—are circumstances elsewhere unparalleled.”—*Scott*.

282. *matin* or *matins*: a service held in a monastery early in the morning.

285. *Lochbuie*: a loch or bay in the south coast of Mull.

299. *Leyden*: “The ballad entitled ‘Macphail of Colonsay, and the Mermaid of Corrievrekin,’ was composed by John Leyden, from a tradition which he found while making a tour through the Hebrides about 1801, soon before his fatal departure for India, where, after having made farther progress in Oriental literature than any man of letters who had embraced those studies, he died a martyr to his zeal for knowledge, in the island of Java, immediately after the landing of our forces near Batavia, in August 1811.”—*Scott*. Leyden was a friend of Scott’s, and a fellow-antiquary. The ballad of Macphail will be found in Scott’s *Border Minstrelsy*.

305. *Tarbat*: usually spelt Tarbert. “The peninsula of Cantire is joined to South Knapdale by a very narrow isthmus, formed by the western and eastern Loch of Tarbat. These two saltwater lakes, or bays, encroach so far upon the land, and the extremities come so near to each other, that there is not above a mile of land to divide them.

“‘It is not long,’ says Pennant, ‘since vessels of nine or ten tons were drawn by horses out of the west loch into that of the east, to avoid the dangers of the Mull of Cantyre, so dreaded and so little known was the navigation round that promontory. It is the opinion of many, that these little isthmuses, so frequently styled Tarbat in North Britain, took their name from the above circumstance; Tarruing, signifying to draw, and Bata, a boat. This too might be called, by way of preeminence, the Tarbat, from a very singular circumstance related by Torfœus. When Magnus, the barefooted King of Norway, obtained from Donald-bane of Scotland the cession of the Western Isles, or all those places that could be surrounded in a boat, he added to them the peninsula of Cantyre by this fraud: he placed himself in the stern of a boat, held the

rudder, was drawn over this narrow track, and by this species of navigation wrested the country from his brother monarch.'—Pennant's *Scotland*.

"But that Bruce also made this passage, although at a period two or three years later than in the poem, appears from the evidence of Barbour, who mentions also the effect produced upon the minds of the Highlanders, from the prophecies current amongst them."—*Scott*.

314. *selcouth**: strange, marvellous.

316. *the Gael*: the Gaelic race.

328. *Loch Ranza*: "a beautiful bay, on the northern extremity of Arran, opening towards East Tarbat Loch. Ben-Ghaoil, 'the mountain of the winds,' is generally known by its English, and less poetical name, of Goatfield."—*Scott*.

338. *sheen**: bright.

XIV—XVII. *Ronald urges on the King his suit for Isabel's hand.*

374. *the Church decide*: betrothal was a formal ceremony, blessed by the Church; it could not therefore be set aside without the Church's sanction.

382. *tourney**: tournament.

392. *Saint Bride*: there was near Loch Ranza a convent dedicated to Saint Brigit, an Irish saint, whose name was in Scotland shortened to Bride and is now generally spelt Bridget.

398. *that speechless boy*: the reader has no doubt divined that the boy is no other than Edith of Lorn in disguise. In the first two Cantos she has a difficult position: she loves Ronald; she is bidden to marry him; but she feels sure that his heart is given to another. Her modest dignity is well contrasted with the ill-balanced behaviour of her ferocious bridegroom. But with the appearance of Bruce the characters appear to be transformed: Ronald becomes an exemplary young chieftain, while Edith, unable to express herself in words, exchanges her fortitude for an undignified and wearisome habit of weeping.

424. *holt*: wood.

428. *the temple*: my love's abode.

439. *Augustin*: Scott accents this name (which he sometimes spells Augustine) Aúgustin, not Augústin.

XVIII—XX. Bruce lands in Arran and is welcomed by his followers.

454. *Good Douglas*: Sir James Douglas, famous as 'the Good Lord James' or 'the Black Douglas.' He was the most trusty noble of Bruce's court, and at Bruce's death-bed was charged to carry the King's heart to the Holy Land as a means of accomplishing his vow to join in the Crusades (II. 566). On the way Douglas took part in the war of the King of Castile against the Moors and was killed. The Bruce's heart was buried at Melrose and the Black Douglas at St Bride's in Douglasdale.

455. *at bay**: a stag is at bay, when, weary of running, he turns upon the hounds and they stand *baying* or barking at him.

457. *waked...the greenwood bounds*: rang through the forest from end to end.

469. "The passage in Barbour, describing the landing of Bruce, and his being recognised by Douglas and those of his followers who had preceded him, by the sound of his horn, is in the original singularly simple and affecting.—The king arrived in Arran with thirty-three small row-boats. He interrogated a female if there had arrived any warlike men of late in that country. 'Surely, sir,' she replied, 'I can tell you of many who lately came hither, discomfited the English governor, and blockaded his castle of Brodick. They maintain themselves in a wood at no great distance.' The king, truly conceiving that this must be Douglas and his followers, who had lately set forth to try their fortune in Arran, desired the woman to conduct him to the wood. She obeyed.

'The king then blew his horn on high;

And gert¹ his men that were him by,

Hold them still, and all privy;

And syne² again his horne blew he.

James of Dowglas heard him blow,

And at the last alone gan know,

And said, "Soothly yon is the king;

I know long while since his blowing."

The third time therewithall he blew,

And then Sir Robert Boid it knew;

And said, "Yon is the king but dread³,

Go we forth till him, better speed⁴."

¹ com-
pelled.

² then.

³ without
doubt.

⁴ with all
speed.

Then went they till the king in hye ¹ ,	¹ haste.
And him inclined courteously.	
And blithly welcomed them the king,	
And was joyful of their meeting,	
And kissed them; and speared ² syne	² asked.
How they had fared in hunting?	
And they him told all, but lesing ³ :	³ without
Syne laud they God of their meeting.	lying.
Syne with the king till his harbourye ⁴	⁴ to his
Went both joyfu' and jolly.'	lodging.

Barbour's *Bruce*."—*Scott*.

479. *red-hair'd Dane*: Haco of Norway was defeated by the Scots at Largs in 1263; as a result, the Norsemen lost the sovereignty over the Western Isles which they had held since 890.

481. *bossy*: studded with bosses or knobs.

483-7. See III. 163, 182, II. 207, 481, and notes.

488. *Kirkpatrick*: see II. 214 and note.

497. *the brunt* to bide*: to withstand the onset of their foes.

522. *Scone*: Bruce was crowned there on March 29, 1306.

528. "The kind, and yet fiery character of Edward Bruce, is well painted by Barbour, in the account of his behaviour after the battle of Bannockburn. Sir Walter Ross, one of the very few Scottish nobles who fell in that battle, was so dearly beloved by Edward, that he wished the victory had been lost, so Ross had lived.

"In like manner, when in a sally from Carrickfergus, Neil Fleming, and the guards whom he commanded, had fallen, after the protracted resistance which saved the rest of Edward Bruce's army, he made such moan as surprised his followers."—*Scott*.

XXI—XXX. *Isabel, urged by Bruce to favour Ronald's suit, refuses unless Edith's spousal ring is given up to her.*

545. *forefend**: forbid.

550. *of thy rule*: of thy monastic order. Each order had its own 'rule' regulating the life of each member. Compare v. 14.

560. *battled*: embattled, crowned by battlements.

588-9. *pallet*-couch*: a straw-mattress, a rough bed. *pall**: rich stuff.

591. 'A rosary and a hair belt' (worn next the skin as a means of penance).

597. *First David*: David I of Scotland (1124-1153). King Robert Bruce's great-grandfather married Isabella, second daughter of David, Earl of Huntingdon, David I's youngest grandson. From his munificence in endowing monasteries David was accounted a saint by succeeding generations, although he was never canonised by the Pope.

677-89. "This incident, which illustrates so happily the chivalrous generosity of Bruce's character, is one of the many simple and natural traits recorded by Barbour. It occurred during the expedition which Bruce made to Ireland, to support the pretensions of his brother Edward to the throne of that kingdom."—*Scott*. Barbour concludes his account of the incident with the lines:—

"This was a full great courtesy,	¹ such.
That swilk ¹ a king and so mighty,	² com-
Gert ² his men dwell ³ on this manner	pelled.
But for a poor lavender ⁴ ."	³ stay.
	⁴ laun-
	dress.

700-1. *spousal contract*: deed or document of betrothal; *acquittal of his oath*: release from his oath.

702. *brooks**: has to endure.

726. 'Thou canst overcome thy feelings.'

760. *my own Turnberry*: see note on V. 471. *court our powers*: invite our forces to capture it.

761. *my father's beadsman**: one whose duty it was to pray for his father's soul.

CANTO V.

Introduction. (Lines 1-18.) *The morning on Loch Ranza*: "Man wakes to care."

7. *spindle*: in the days before the spinning-wheel was used, the method of spinning was to fasten several fibres of wool from the distaff to a slip of wood called the spindle; the fibres with the spindle hanging at their end were twirled between the finger and thumb and so twisted into a thread.

9. *coil**: trouble.

II-III. *Edith secretly conveys her spousal ring to Isabel*.

21. *enchased*: chased, ornamented with carving.

IV—VI. Isabel discovers that the page is Edith in disguise, and despatches Father Augustin to Brodick to bring her back.

90. *armed crests*: antlered heads.

113-4. *cowl*: the hood worn by monks; *did on*: instead of *do on* we now use the contracted form *don*; *piked*: furnished with a *pike* or point; *sandall'd shoon* or "sandal shoon" (*Hamlet*, IV. 5. 26) are shoes formed of sandals, that is, wooden soles strapped to the feet.

115. *eld*: old age.

130. *ample stride*: "The interior of the island of Arran abounds with beautiful highland scenery. The hills, being very rocky and precipitous, afford some cataracts of great height, though of inconsiderable breadth. There is one pass over the river Machrai, renowned for the dilemma of a poor woman, who, being tempted by the narrowness of the ravine to step across, succeeded in making the first movement, but took fright when it became necessary to move the other foot, and remained in a posture equally ludicrous and dangerous, until some chance passenger assisted her to extricate herself. It is said she remained there some hours."—*Scott*.

132. *Druids*: "The isle of Arran, like those of Man and Anglesea, abounds with many relics of heathen, and probably Druidical, superstition. There are high erect columns of unhewn stone, the most early of all monuments; the circles of rude stones, commonly entitled Druidical; and the cairns or sepulchral piles, within which are usually found urns enclosing ashes. Much doubt necessarily rests upon the history of such monuments, nor is it possible to consider them as exclusively Celtic or Druidical."—*Scott*.

136. *Shiloh's sun*: Christ. The reference is to Genesis xlix. 10, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah.....until Shiloh come." According to one interpretation, Shiloh means 'peace' and is used as a title of the Messiah.

138. *his hours*: the prayers appointed for the seven canonical hours in the day, which, as a priest, he was bound to recite.

143. *Brodick*: "Brodick or Brathwick Castle, in the Isle of Arran, is an ancient fortress, near an open roadstead called Brodick-Bay, and not far distant from a tolerable harbour, closed in by the island of Lamlash. This important place had been assailed a short time before Bruce's arrival in the island. James Lord Douglas, who accompanied Bruce to his retreat in Rachrine, seems, in the spring of 1306, to have tired of his abode there, and set out accordingly, in the phrase of the

times, to see what adventure God would send him. Sir Robert Boyd accompanied him; and his knowledge of the localities of Arran appears to have directed his course thither. They landed in the island privately, and appear to have laid an ambush for Sir John Hastings, the English governor of Brodwick, and surprised a considerable supply of arms and provisions, and nearly took the castle itself. Indeed, that they actually did so, has been generally averred by historians, although it does not appear from the narrative of Barbour. On the contrary, it would seem that they took shelter within a fortification of the ancient inhabitants, a rampart called *Tor an Schian*. When they were joined by Bruce it seems probable that they had gained Brodick Castle. At least tradition says that from the battlements of the tower he saw the supposed signal-fire on Turnberry-nook."—*Scott*.

VII—X. *Augustin finds that Edward Bruce has sent the page to Turnberry.*

167. *harness**: armour; their harness was *light*, as distinguished from the heavy armour worn by mounted knights, but still it had to be rivetted on, as had the heavier armour:—

“The armourers, accomplishing the knights,
With busy hammers closing rivets up,
Give dreadful note of preparation.”

Shakespeare, *Henry V*, IV. prol. 12.

171. Scott does not accuse Bruce's men of using bad language without quoting an ancient authority: in 1308 Douglas captured in a lonely farmhouse Randolph (see note on VI. 25) and Lord Bonkle. According to the edition of Barbour's *Bruce* which Scott used, Douglas was led to suspect that the farmhouse contained warlike guests because he “herd ane say tharin ‘the Dewill’” (heard someone say therein ‘the Devil’). But later editions, following more trustworthy manuscripts, have in place of this “herd thar sawis ilke dele” (heard their sayings every bit). The charge, therefore, that these patriots used “language much unmeet” has probably not the support of Barbour's authority.

208. *snatch a mass*: hurriedly attend mass.

217. *the ruddy signal*: “The remarkable circumstances by which Bruce was induced to enter Scotland, under the false idea that a signal-fire was lighted upon the shore near his maternal castle of Turnberry—the disappointment which he met with, and the train of success which arose out of that very disappointment, are too curious to be passed over

unnoticed. The following is a narrative of Barbour. The introduction is a favourable specimen of his style, which seems to be in some degree the model for that of Gawain Douglas¹:—

This wes in ver, quhen wynter tid²,
With his blastis hidwyss to bid,
Was ourdriffin; and byrdis smale,
As thristill and the nyctyngale,
Begouth rycht meraly to syng;
And for to mak in thair singyng
Syndry notis, and soundis ser,
And melodys plesand to her;
And the treis begouth to ma
Burgeans, and brycht blomys alsua,
To wyn the helyng off thair hewid,
That wykkyt wyntir had thaim rewid.
And all grewis beguth to spryng.
In to that tyme the nobill king,
With his flote, and a few menyne,
Thre hundyr I trow thai mycht be,
Wes to the se, owte off Arane
A litill forouth ewyn gane.

Thai rowit fast, with all thair mycht,
Till that apoun thaim fell the nycht,
That woux myrk apoun gret maner,
Swa that thai wyst nocht quhar thei wer.
For thai na nedill had, na stane;
Bot rowyt always in till ane,
Stemmand always apoun the fyr,
That thai saw brynnand lycht and schyr.
It wes bot auentur thaim led:
And thai in schort tyme sa thaim sped,
That at the fyr arywyt thai:
And went to land bot mar delay.
And Cuthbert, that has sene the fyr,
Was full off angry, and off ire:
For he durst nocht do it away;
And wes alsua downtand ay
That his lord suld pass the se.
Tharfor thair cummyn waytit he;
And met thaim at thair arywing.
He wes wele sone brought to the King,
That speryt at him how he had done.
And he with sar hart tauld him sone
How that he fand nane weill lufand;
Bot all war fayis, that he fand:
And that the lord the Persy,

This was in spring, when winter tide
With his blasts, hideous to abide,
Was overpast: and birds small,
As throstle and the nightingale,
Began right merrily to sing,
And for to make in their singing
Varied notes and diverse sounds
And melodies pleasant to hear;
And the trees began to make
Buds and bright blooms also,
To gain the covering of their head
That cruel winter had from them bereft;
And all the groves began to spring.
In that time the noble king
With his fleet and a small band,
Three hundred I trow they might be,
Put to the sea, out of Arran
A little before the evening ended.

They rowed fast with all their might
Until upon them fell the night,
Which waxed dark in great manner,
So that they wist not where they were.
For they no needle had nor stone,
But rowed always in one direction
Steering always to the fire,
Which they saw burning clear and bright.
It was but chance that them led:
And they in short time so sped
That at the fire they arrived,
And landed without more delay.
And Cuthbert, who has seen the fire,
Was full of anger and of ire:
For he durst not do it away,
And was also fearing ever
That his lord would pass the sea.
Therefore their coming waited he,
And met them at their arriving.
He was very soon brought to the King,
Who asked him how he had sped.
And he with sore heart told him quickly
How that he found none well disposed,
But all were foes that he found;
And that the lord Percy

¹ Bishop of Dunkeld; he made a Scotch translation of Virgil's *Aeneid*, A.D. 1512-3.

² The text, as given by Scott, has been altered in several places by the introduction of readings adopted in Prof. Skeat's edition of the *Bruce*, and a literal translation has been added.

With ner thre hundre in cumpany,
 Was in the castell thar besid,
 Fullfillyt off dispyt and prid.
 Bot ma than twa partis off his rowt
 War herberynt in the toun without;
 'And dyspytyt yow mar, Schir King,
 Than men may dispyt ony thing.'
 Than said the King, in full gret ire;
 'Tratour, quhy maid thow than the fyr.
 'A! Schyr,' said he, 'sa God me se!
 The fyr wes newyr maid for me.
 Na, or the nycht, I wyst it nocht;
 Bot fra I wyst it, weill I thocht
 That ye, and haly your menye,
 In hy suld put yow to the se.
 For thi I cum to mete yow her,
 To tell perellys that may aper.'

The King wes off his speik angry,
 And askyt his prywé men, in hy,
 Quhat at thaim thought wes best to do.
 Schyr Edward fryst answerit thar to,
 Hys brodyr that wes swa hardy,
 And said; 'I say yow sekyrly
 That sall na perell, that may be,
 Dryve me eftsonys to the se.
 Myne auentur her tak will I,
 Quhethir it be esfull or angry.'
 'Brothyr,' he said, 'sen thou will sua,
 It is gud that we samyn ta
 Dissese or ese, or payne or play,
 Eftyr as God will ws purway.
 And sen men sayis that the Persy
 Myn heretage will occupy;
 And his menye sa ner ws lyis,
 That ws dispytis mony wyss;
 Ga we and wenge sum off the dispyte
 And that may we haiff done als tite;
 For thai ly traistly, but dreding
 Off ws, or off our her cummyng.
 And thought we slepand slew thaim all,
 Repruff tharof us na man sall.
 For werrayour na forss suld ma,
 Quhethir he mycht ourcom his fa
 Throw strenth, or throw sutelté;
 Bot that gud faith ay haldyn be.'

Barbour's *Bruce*, Book iv. v. 1-88.—*Scott*.

230. *submiss*: submissive.

236. *noteless*: not likely to be noted or observed.

With near three hundred in company
 Was in the castle close by,
 Full of despite and pride.
 But more than two parts of his band
 Were lodged in the town outside,
 'And despise you more, Sir King,
 Than men may despise anything.'
 Then said the King in full great ire:
 'Traitor, why madest thou the fire?'
 'Ah, Sire,' said he, 'so may God watch over me
 The fire was never made by me.
 Nor, ere the night, I knew not of it;
 But when I knew of it, well I thought
 That you and all your band
 In haste would put to sea.
 Therefore I came to meet you here
 To tell of perils that may appear.'

The King was with his speech angry,
 And asked of his trusty men in haste
 What seemed to them was best to do.
 Sir Edward first answered thereto—
 His brother that was so bold—
 And said: 'I tell you surely
 There shall no peril that may happen
 Drive me again to the sea.
 My adventure here take will I,
 Whether it be easeful or adverse.'
 'Brother,' he said, 'since thou wilt so,
 It is good that we together take
 Dis-ease or ease, hardship or pleasure,
 According as God shall to us ordain.
 And since men say that the Percy
 My heritage will occupy,
 And his band so near us lie,
 Who despise us in many ways;
 Go we and avenge some of the despite,
 And that may we have done quickly;
 For they lie securely without dreading
 Of us, or of our coming.
 And though we slew them all sleeping,
 Reprove us thereof no man will.
 For warrior no account should take,
 Whether he might overcome his foe
 Through strength or through subtlety,
 If only good faith aye be kept.'

*XI—XIV. Bruce and his band, guided by a mysterious beacon,
cross to Turnberry.*

258. 'Grant her knight the favour of bearing.'

303. Note how Scott calls attention to the whiteness of the sail in the moonlight as a contrast to the redness of the beacon on which he is about to insist (lines 304-19).

310. *south and by west* is $11\frac{1}{4}$ degrees west of due south.

326. *good my Liege*: *my* is attached so closely to *lord* that the adjective precedes it; so in French *monsieur*. This usage is common in Shakespeare.

329. *whate'er betide*: whatever may happen; the same meaning is expressed by "hap what may" (399).

340. *fiery chair*: "Behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven"—2 Kings ii. 11.

355-8. See II. 214-5 and note.

*XV—XVI. Bruce finds that Turnberry is strongly garrisoned;
nevertheless he persists in the enterprise.*

369. 'Shield locked against shield and spears arrayed in close order.'

371. *sought the tide*: led to the sea.

378. *ware*: wary, on the alert.

402. *wildfire*: will o' the wisp, called "wildfire from the moss" or marsh, VI. 589. In the note on line 432 it is called a *spunkie*.

419. *Southern**: *Southrons* is the form more commonly used in Scotland.

423. *bosk**: thicket.

XVII. Whence came the mysterious light?

432. *still gleams the light*: the idea that there was anything uncanny about the light was derived from a Galloway antiquarian named Train, who wrote to Scott: "The only tradition now remembered of the landing of Robert the Bruce in Carrick, relates to the fire seen by him from the Isle of Arran. It is still generally reported, and religiously believed by many, that this fire was really the work of supernatural power, unassisted by the hand of any mortal being, and it is said that

for several centuries the flame rose yearly on the same hour of the same night of the year, on which the king first saw it from the turrets of Brodick castle; and some go so far as to say that if the exact time were known, it would be still seen. That this superstitious notion is very ancient, is evident from the place where the fire is said to have appeared, being called the Bogles' Brae, beyond the remembrance of man. In support of this curious belief, it is said that the practice of burning heath for the improvement of land was then unknown; that a spunkie (Jack o' lanthorn) could not have been seen across the breadth of the Forth of Clyde, between Ayrshire and Arran; and that the courier of Bruce was his kinsman, and never suspected of treachery." Barbour however simply says that Bruce "thought well that he saw a fire," and that his followers thought so too, but that Cuthbert denied having made any such signal.

XVIII—XXI. They make for a safe retreat; the page, too exhausted to accompany them, is concealed in an oak.

455. *Clan-Colla*: the clan Macdonald, to which Ronald belonged.

471. *the castle*: Bruce inherited Turnberry Castle from his mother. "Martha, Countess of Carrick in her own right, the wife of Robert Bruce, Lord of Annandale, bare him a son, afterwards Robert I (11th July, 1274). The circumstances of her marriage were singular: happening to meet Robert Bruce in her domains, she became enamoured of him, and with some violence led him to her castle of Turnberry. A few days after she married him, without the knowledge of the relations of either party, and without the requisite consent of the king (Alexander III). The king instantly seized her castle and whole estates. She afterwards atoned by a fine for her feudal delinquency. Little did Alexander foresee that from this union the restorer of the Scottish monarchy was to arise."—Lord Hailes' *Annals of Scotland*, II. p. 180.

"Around the Castle of Turnberry was a level plain of about two miles in extent, forming the castle park. There could be nothing, I am informed, more beautiful than the copsewood and verdure of this extensive meadow before it was invaded by the ploughshare."—*Scott*.

517. 'If only this night and thy care pass.'

535. *bosky bourne**: the edge of the thicket.

539. *bestow'd**: concealed.

XXII—XXVI. The page is discovered by hunters from the castle; Clifford orders him to be hung.

556. *lurcher**: a lurker, a spy.

569. *Lorn*: John of Lorn, Edith's brother, and son of Allaster of Lorn, who appears in Canto II.

586. *laid them aboard*: to lay a ship aboard is to place one's own ship alongside of it, prepared to fight.

611. *scathed**: blasted.

614. *rite*: due ceremony.

633. *headsman*: executioner—strictly, one who beheads.

635-6. 'They end their march beneath that oak, which they destine for the place of death.'

646-7. 'The actual death-agony will be less hard to bear than this moment of expectation.'

XXVII—XXX. Rescue of the page.

656. *abye**: pay for it, suffer for it.

670. *port**: gate. Contrast its meaning in line 766.

707. *sped*: slain.

721. *recollection*: of the part he had to play.

XXXI—XXXIV. Capture of the castle.

737. *arose*: were raised. By snapping the chain he prevented the enemy from raising the drawbridge and cutting off his retreat.

751. *ward* on ward*: the various parts of the castle, entrusted to the care of different warders.

769. *short...shrift*: short time to confess his sins.

775. *donjon**: the keep or principal tower of a castle, built especially strong to withstand a siege, even if the rest of the castle were captured.

779. "I have followed the flattering and pleasing tradition, that the Bruce, after his descent upon the coast of Ayrshire, actually gained possession of his maternal castle. But the tradition is not accurate. The fact is, that he was only strong enough to alarm and drive in the outposts of the English garrison, then commanded, not by Clifford, as assumed in the text, but by Percy. Neither was Clifford slain upon this occasion, though he had several skirmishes with Bruce. He fell

afterwards in the battle of Bannockburn. Bruce, after alarming the castle of Turnberry, and surprising some part of the garrison, who were quartered without the walls of the fortress, retreated into the mountainous part of Carrick, and there made himself so strong, that the English were obliged to evacuate Turnberry, and at length the castle of Ayr. Many of his benefactions and royal gifts attest his attachment to the hereditary followers of his house, in this part of the country."—*Scott*.

798. *mazers**: large drinking-bowls.

801. *the pledge**: the toast.

815. "As soon as it was known in Kyle, says ancient tradition, that Robert Bruce had landed in Carrick, with the intention of recovering the crown of Scotland, the Laird of Craigie and forty-eight men in his immediate neighbourhood declared in favour of their legitimate prince. Bruce granted them a tract of land, still retained by the free-men of Newton to this day."—*Scott*.

818. *Ettrick*: the forest of Selkirk or Ettrick, a much more extensive district than that which now bears the name, was famous for its archers. "At the fatal battle of Falkirk, Sir John Stewart, of Bonkill, brother to the Steward of Scotland, commanded the archers of Selkirk Forest, who fell around the dead body of their leader. The English historians have commemorated the tall and stately persons, as well as the unswerving faith of these foresters."—*Scott*.

820. *Reedswair-Path*: part of Carter Fell, in the Cheviots, about 10 miles south-east of Jedburgh.

CANTO VI.

Introduction. (Lines 1-27.) *The poet compares the joy with which Bruce's victories were received in Scotland with the rejoicings which had welcomed the recent victories over Napoleon.*

14. *twenty rolling years*: France declared war against England in 1793, and the war continued (with a short interval after the Treaty of Amiens in 1802) until the First Peace of Paris (1814). The battle of Toulouse, Wellington's last victory in the Peninsular War and the sixth which he gained within 10 months, was fought in April 1814. In the previous October Russia, Prussia, and Austria had inflicted a crushing defeat on Napoleon at Leipsic.

18. *Despot's fall*: Napoleon abdicated in April 1814. The Lord

of the Isles, written late in 1814, was therefore composed in the interval between the Peninsular War and Napoleon's "Hundred Days," which terminated at Waterloo in June 1815.

22. *Loudoun...Ury*: "The first important advantage gained by Bruce, after landing at Turnberry, was over Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, the same by whom he had been defeated near Methven. They met, as has been said, by appointment, at Loudonhill, in the west of Scotland. Pembroke sustained a defeat; and from that time Bruce was at the head of a considerable flying army. Yet he was subsequently obliged to retreat into Aberdeenshire, and was there [at Old Meldrum, near the valley of the Ury] assailed by Comyn, Earl of Buchan, desirous to avenge the death of his relative, the Red Comyn, and supported by a body of English troops under Philip de Mowbray. Bruce was ill at the time of a scrofulous disorder, but took horse to meet his enemies, although obliged to be supported on either side. He was victorious, and it is said that the agitation of his spirits restored his health."—*Scott*.

23. *Douglas-dale*: "The 'good Lord James of Douglas,' during these commotions, often took from the English his own castle of Douglas, but being unable to garrison it, contented himself with destroying the fortifications, and retiring into the mountains. As a reward to his patriotism, it is said to have been prophesied that how often soever Douglas Castle should be destroyed, it should always again arise more magnificent from its ruins. Upon one of these occasions he used fearful cruelty, causing all the store of provisions, which the English had laid up in his castle, to be heaped together, bursting the wine and beer casks among the wheat and flour, slaughtering the cattle upon the same spot, and upon the top of the whole cutting the throats of the English prisoners. This pleasantry of 'the good Lord James' is commemorated under the name of the *Douglas's Larder*. A more pleasing tale of chivalry is recorded by Godscroft. 'By this means, and such other exploits, he so affrighted the enemy, that it was counted a matter of great jeopardie to keep this castle, which began to be called the *adventurous* (or hazardous) *Castle of Douglas*; whereupon Sir John Walton being in suit of an English lady, she wrote to him, that when he had kept the adventurous Castle of Douglas seven years, then he might think himself worthy to be a suitor to her. Upon this occasion Walton took upon him the keeping of it, and succeeded to Thruswall, but he ran the same fortune with the rest that were before him. For Sir James, having first dressed an ambuscade near unto the place, he

made fourteen of his men take so many sacks, and fill them with grass, as though it had been corn, which they carried in the way to Lanark, the chief market-town in that country: so hoping to draw forth the captain by that bait, and either to take him or the castle, or both. Neither was this expectation frustrated, for the captain did bite, and came forth to have taken this victual (as he supposed). But ere he could reach these carriers, Sir James, with his company, had gotten between the castle and him; and these disguised carriers, seeing the captain following after them, did quickly cast off their sacks, mounted themselves on horseback, and met the captain with a sharp encounter, being so much the more amazed, as it was unlooked for: wherefore, when he saw these carriers metamorphosed into warriors, and ready to assault him, fearing that which was, that there was some train laid for them, he turned about to have retired to his castle, but there he also met with his enemies: between which two companies he and his whole followers were slain, so that none escaped: the captain afterwards being searched, they found (as it is reported) his mistress's letter about him.' Hume of Godscroft's *History of the House of Douglas*."—*Scott*. This is the foundation of Scott's last novel, *Castle Dangerous*.

24. *St John*: "John de St John, with 15,000 horsemen, had advanced to oppose the inroad of the Scots. By a forced march he endeavoured to surprise them, but intelligence of his motions was timeously received. The courage of Edward Bruce, approaching to temerity, frequently enabled him to achieve what men of more judicious valour would never have attempted. He ordered the infantry, and the meaner sort of his army, to intrench themselves in strong narrow ground. He himself, with fifty horsemen well harnessed, issued forth under cover of a thick mist, surprised the English on their march, attacked and dispersed them."—Hailes' *Annals of Scotland*, II. p. 25.

25. *Randolph*: "Thomas Randolph, Bruce's sister's son, a renowned Scottish chief, was in the early part of his life not more remarkable for consistency than Bruce himself. He espoused his uncle's party when Bruce first assumed the crown, and was made prisoner at the fatal battle of Methven, in which his relative's hopes appeared to be ruined. Randolph accordingly not only submitted to the English, but took an active part against Bruce, appeared in arms against him, and in the skirmish where he was so closely pursued by the bloodhound, it is said his nephew took his standard with his own hand. But Randolph was afterwards made prisoner by Douglas in Tweeddale, and brought before King Robert. Some harsh language was exchanged between the

uncle and nephew, and the latter was committed for a time to close custody. Afterwards, however, they were reconciled, and Randolph was created Earl of Moray about 1312. After this period he eminently distinguished himself, first by the surprise of Edinburgh Castle, and afterwards by many similar enterprises, conducted with equal courage and ability."—*Scott*.

II. Edith, abandoning her disguise, is placed at St Bride's under the protection of Isabel, who becomes a nun.

33. *vo'tress*: a votaress is a woman who has taken the monastic vow.

35. *scapulare**: a scarf worn across the shoulders by monks and nuns of certain orders.

40. *palmer**: pilgrims were great carriers of news in the days when other travellers were rare.

III—IX. Seven years after the capture of Turnberry, Bruce, wishing Edith to marry Ronald, requests her to come to court; Isabel persuades her to obey; she is escorted by a contingent sent from Arran to the King at Bannockburn.

74-7. *took term** of *truce*: settled a truce for a limited time; *John the Baptist's Eve*: the evening of St John the Baptist's Day (Midsummer Day, June 24). "When a long train of success, actively improved by Robert Bruce, had made him master of almost all Scotland, Stirling Castle continued to hold out. The care of the blockade was committed by the king to his brother Edward, who concluded a treaty with Sir Philip Mowbray, the governor, that he should surrender the fortress, if it were not succoured by the King of England before St John the Baptist's Day. The king severely blamed his brother for the impolicy of a treaty, which gave time to the King of England to advance to the relief of the castle with all his assembled forces, and obliged himself either to meet them in battle with an inferior force, or to retreat with dishonour. 'Let all England come,' answered the reckless Edward; 'we will fight them were they more.' The consequence was, of course, that each kingdom mustered its strength for the expected battle; and as the space agreed upon reached from Lent to Midsummer, full time was allowed for that purpose."—*Scott*.

81. *to meet their Liege*: Scott gives the following account of the

summons which Edward II issued to the Sheriff of York: "We have understood that our Scottish enemies and rebels are endeavouring to collect as strong a force as possible of infantry, in strong and marshy grounds, where the approach of cavalry would be difficult, between us and the castle of Stirling."—It then sets forth Mowbray's agreement to surrender the castle, if not relieved before St John the Baptist's Day, and the king's determination, with divine grace, to raise the siege. 'Therefore,' the summons further bears, 'to remove our said enemies and rebels from such places as above mentioned, it is necessary for us to have a strong force of infantry fit for arms.' And accordingly the sheriff of York is commanded to equip and send forth a body of four thousand infantry, to be assembled at Werk, upon the tenth day of June first, under pain of the royal displeasure."—*Scott*. A similar summons was issued to other officials.

93. *Neustria*: poetically used for North-West France. Strictly Neustria was the name of a kingdom of the Franks before the tenth century: it was bounded by Brittany, the Loire, and the Meuse.

94. *Gascogne*: Gascony, the country between the Garonne and the Pyrenees.

95. *Cambria*: "Edward the First, with the usual policy of a conqueror, employed the Welsh, whom he had subdued, to assist him in his Scottish wars, for which their habits, as mountaineers, particularly fitted them. But this policy was not without its risks. Previous to the battle of Falkirk, the Welsh quarrelled with the English men-at-arms, and after bloodshed on both parts, separated themselves from his army, and the feud between them, at so dangerous and critical a juncture, was reconciled with difficulty. Edward II followed his father's example in this particular, and with no better success. They could not be brought to exert themselves in the cause of their conquerors. But they had an indifferent reward for their forbearance. Without arms, and clad only in scanty dresses of linen cloth, they appeared naked in the eyes even of the Scottish peasantry; and after the rout of Bannockburn, were massacred by them in great numbers, as they retired in confusion towards their own country. They were under command of Sir Maurice de Berkeley."—*Scott*.

97. *Connoght*: Connaught. Edward II issued "an invitation to Eth O'Connor, chief of the Irish of Connaught, setting forth that the king was about to move against his Scottish rebels, and therefore requesting the attendance of all the force he could muster, either commanded by himself in person, or by some nobleman of his race.

These auxiliaries were to be commanded by Richard de Burgh, Earl of Ulster."—*Scott*. Similar mandates were issued to other Irish chiefs.

100. *devoted**: doomed. *Caledon*: Caledonia, an ancient name of Scotland.

118. *Marshal's-Moss*: near Berwick-on-Tweed.

164. *some glance of policy*: some regard for his own interest. After his victory over John of Lorn near Loch Awe (see note on 1. 267), "Bruce laid waste Argyleshire, and besieged Dunstaffnage Castle, on the western shore of Lorn, compelled it to surrender, and placed in that principal stronghold of the Mac-Dougals a garrison and governor of his own. The elder Mac-Dougal, now wearied with the contest, submitted to the victor; but his son, 'rebellious,' says Barbour, 'as he wont to be,' fled to England by sea."—*Scott*. Edith was now the heiress of Lorn, her father and her brother being both dead, and Bruce would be glad to see her married to his faithful adherent Ronald.

175. 'Edith plied Isabel with arguments.'

181. *agen*: again—a form common in 17th and 18th century poets.

201. *a ward*: if a vassal died leaving only a daughter to succeed to his lands, the feudal lord claimed the right to bestow her in marriage on whom he would.

202. *to stay*: at Bruce's court.

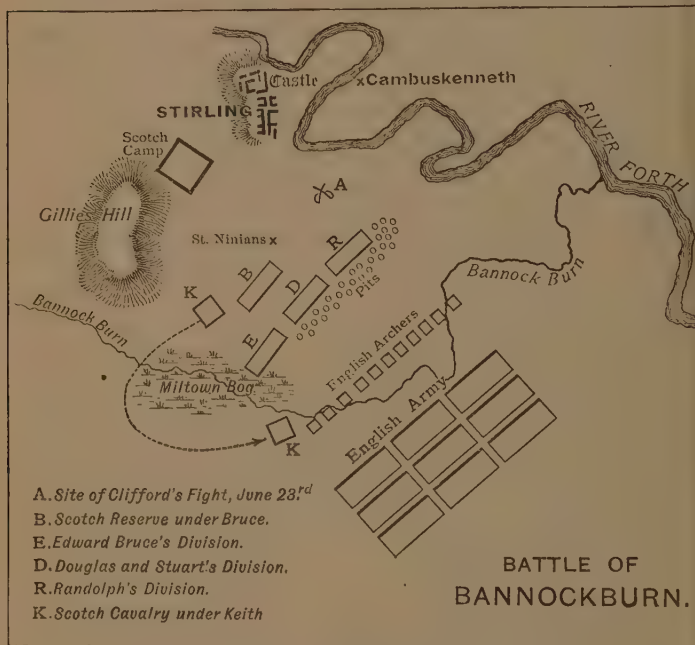
220. *Fitz-Louis*: "Fitz-Louis, or Mac-Louis, otherwise called Fullarton, is a family of ancient descent in the Isle of Arran. They are said to be of French origin, as the name intimates. They attached themselves to Bruce upon his first landing; and Fergus Mac-Louis, or Fullarton, received from the grateful monarch a charter, dated 26th November, in the second year of his reign (1307), for the lands of Kilmichel, and others, which still remain in this very ancient and respectable family."—*Scott*.

222-3. 'Befitted the page whom the monarch dearly loved.'

X. Edith reaches Bannockburn on the eve of the battle.

232. *battles*: battalions or divisions. In the following account of Bruce's arrangements for the battle, Scott follows the authority of Barbour:—"Two days before the battle Bruce selected the field of action, and took post there with his army, consisting of about 30,000 disciplined men, and about half the number of disorderly attendants upon the camp. The ground was called the New Park of Stirling; it was partly open, and partly broken by copses of wood and marshy

ground. He divided his regular forces into four divisions. Three of these occupied a front line, separated from each other, yet sufficiently near for the purposes of communication. The fourth division formed a reserve. The line extended in a north-easterly direction from the brook of Bannock, which was so rugged and broken as to cover the right flank effectually, to the village of Saint Ninian's, probably in the line of the



present road from Stirling to Kilsyth. Edward Bruce commanded the right wing, which was strengthened by a strong body of cavalry under Keith, the Mareschal of Scotland, to whom was committed the important charge of attacking the English archers; Douglas, and the young Steward of Scotland, led the central wing; and Thomas Randolph, Earl of Moray, the left wing. The king himself commanded the fourth division, which lay in the reserve behind the others. The royal standard

was pitched, according to tradition, in a stone, having a round hole for its reception, and thence called the Bore-stone. It is still shown on the top of a small eminence, called Brock's-brae, to the south-west of St Ninian's. His main body thus disposed, King Robert sent the followers of the camp, fifteen thousand and upwards in number, to the eminence in the rear of his army, called from that circumstance the *Gillies' (i.e. the servants') Hill*.

"The military advantages of this position were obvious. The Scottish left flank, protected by the brook of Bannock, could not be turned; or, if that attempt were made, a movement by the reserve might have covered it. Again, the English could not pass the Scottish army, and move towards Stirling, without exposing their flank to be attacked while in march.

"If, on the other hand, the Scottish line had been drawn up east and west, and facing to the southward, as affirmed by Buchanan, and adopted by Mr Nimmo, the author of the History of Stirlingshire, there appeared nothing to have prevented the English approaching upon the carse, or level ground, from Falkirk, either from turning the Scottish left flank, or from passing their position, if they preferred it, without coming to an action, and moving on to the relief of Stirling. And the *Gillies' Hill*, if this less probable hypothesis be adopted, would be situated, not in the rear, as allowed by all the historians, but upon the right flank of Bruce's army. The only objection to the hypothesis above laid down is, that the left flank of Bruce's army was thereby exposed to a sally from the garrison of Stirling. But, 1st, the garrison were bound to neutrality by terms of Mowbray's treaty; and Barbour even seems to censure, as a breach of faith, some secret assistance which they rendered their countrymen upon the eve of battle, in placing temporary bridges of doors and spars over the pools of water in the carse, to enable them to advance to the charge. 2dly, Had this not been the case, the strength of the garrison was probably not sufficient to excite apprehension. 3dly, The adverse hypothesis leaves the rear of the Scottish army as much exposed to the Stirling garrison, as the left flank would be in the case supposed.

"It only remains to notice the nature of the ground in front of Bruce's line of battle. Being part of a park, or chase, it was considerably interrupted with trees; and an extensive marsh, still visible, in some places rendered it inaccessible, and in all of difficult approach. More to the northward, where the natural impediments were fewer, Bruce fortified his position against cavalry, by digging a number of pits so

close together, says Barbour, as to resemble the cells in a honeycomb. They were a foot in breadth, and between two and three feet deep, many rows of them being placed one behind the other. They were slightly covered with brushwood and green sods, so as not to be obvious to an impetuous enemy.

"All the Scottish army were on foot, excepting a select body of cavalry stationed with Edward Bruce on the right wing, under the immediate command of Sir Robert Keith, the Marshal of Scotland, who were destined for the important service of charging and dispersing the English archers.

"Thus judiciously posted, in a situation fortified both by art and nature, Bruce awaited the attack of the English."

236. *vaward*-line*: the line of the van, the front which the army presented to the enemy.

240. *the Southern host*: "Upon the 23rd June, 1314, the alarm reached the Scottish army of the approach of the enemy. Douglas and the Marshal were sent to reconnoitre with a body of cavalry;

'And soon the great host have they seen,

Where shields shining were so sheen,

And basinets burnished bright,

That gave against the sun great light.

They saw so fele¹ brawdyne² baners,

¹ many.

² embroidered.

Standards and pennons and spears,

And so fele knights upon steeds,

All flaming in their weeds³,

³ robes.

And so fele bataills, and so broad,

And too so great room as they rode,

That the maist⁴ host, and the stoutest

⁴ greatest.

Of Christendom, and the greatest,

Should be abaysit⁵ for to see

⁵ abashed.

Their foes into such quantity.'

The Bruce, XI. 460-73.

"The two Scottish commanders were cautious in the account which they brought back to their camp. To the king in private they told the formidable state of the enemy; but in public reported that the English were indeed a numerous host, but ill commanded and worse disciplined."

—*Scott*.

245. *glaiues**: swords.

XI—XIII. The Scotch army at Bannockburn.

257. *the valiant of the Isles*: "The men of Argyle, the islanders, and the Highlanders in general, were ranked in the rear. They must have been numerous, for Bruce had reconciled himself with almost all their chieftains, excepting the obnoxious Macdougals of Lorn."—*Scott*.

262. *Lord Ronald's banner*: a galley is carved on the tombstone of Angus Macdonald, Lord of the Isles, at Iona.

265. *mail**, chain-armour, is here contrasted with *plate*, armour formed of plates of steel.

281. *Marchers*: the Lord Wardens of the Marches or Border.

282. *Lodon*: Lothian, the district between the Tweed, the Forth, and the Lowther Hills.

283. *Liddell*: Liddesdale, the valley of the Liddell Water towards the west of the Border.

285. Nithsdale and Annandale run through Dumfriesshire southwards towards the Solway Firth.

288. *Stuart* or Stewart was originally the name of the office held by the head of the family, whose proper name was Fitz-Alan: he was High Steward of Scotland. The Stuart mentioned in the text married Bruce's daughter Marjorie, and their son became Robert II of Scotland (see lines 690-1).

289. *Saint Ninian's shrine*: a church dedicated to Saint Ninian, who is said to have been a missionary among the Southern Picts in the modern Wigtonshire, and to have died 432 A.D.

298. *Keith*: the Keiths were Marshals of Scotland, bearing the title of Earl Marshal or Marischal.

315. *wight**: active, strong.

319. *basinet**: a light steel cap.

322. *truncheon or leading staff*: the baton carried as a sign of office by the commander of an army. See line 558.

XIV. The English army.

339. *battled*: drawn up for battle. For a different meaning see L. 176, IV. 560.

340. *doom*: he was deposed in 1327 and murdered at Berkeley Castle in the same year.

343. 'Some trace of the valour of his ancestors.' The name *Plantagenet* was first assumed by Geoffrey of Anjou, father of Henry II.

361. *Sir Henry Boune* or Bohun was cousin of the Earl of Hereford.

XV. Bruce kills Sir Henry Boune in single combat.

The account of the single combat is taken from Barbour, even to details such as the crown on the Bruce's basinet (318); but the part played by Edward II and Argentine (346-60) is not from Barbour.

368. *as motionless as rocks*: this simile or comparison would be more forcible if Bruce were compared to a single rock; but in that case we should have *bides* instead of *bide* and the rhyme would be spoilt. Scott could readily have found a way out of this difficulty if he had cared to do so. It is well to remember however that other poets, who give their attention to such points, cannot describe a passage of arms with Scott's energy and vividness.

378. *career**: charge.

389. *gauntlet grasp*: the part of the handle fashioned to be gripped by the steel gauntlet.

391. *corse**: body.

XVI—XVII. Edith, disguised, is received by Bruce.

405. *my folly's tax*: the due penalty of my folly.

422. *fantasy*: caprice, sport.

XVIII. Attempt of English cavalry to enter Stirling prevented by Randolph.

445. Scott tells us that "Bruce had enjoined Randolph, who commanded the left wing of his army, to be vigilant in preventing any advance parties of the English from throwing succours into the castle of Stirling," and he quotes from Lord Hailes the following account of this attempt to relieve Stirling: "Eight hundred horsemen, commanded by Sir Robert Clifford, were detached from the English army; they made a circuit by the low grounds to the east, and approached the castle. The king perceived their motions, and coming up to Randolph, angrily

exclaimed, 'Thoughtless man! you have suffered the enemy to pass.' Randolph hastened to repair his fault, or perish. As he advanced, the English cavalry wheeled to attack him. Randolph drew up his troops in a circular form, with their spears resting on the ground, and protended on every side. At the first onset, Sir William Daynecourt, an English commander of distinguished note, was slain. The enemy, far superior in number to Randolph, environed him, and pressed hard on this little band. Douglas saw his jeopardy, and requested the king's permission to go and succour him. 'You shall not move from your ground,' cried the king; 'let Randolph extricate himself as he best may. I will not alter my order of battle, and lose the advantage of my position.'—'In truth,' replied Douglas, 'I cannot stand by and see Randolph perish; and therefore, with your leave, I must aid him.' The king unwillingly consented, and Douglas flew to the assistance of his friend. While approaching, he perceived that the English were falling into disorder, and that the perseverance of Randolph had prevailed over their impetuous courage. 'Halt,' cried Douglas, 'those brave men have repulsed the enemy: let us not diminish their glory by sharing it.'" Two large stones formerly marked the scene of this skirmish, and from their position, a quarter of a mile south of Stirling, Scott argues that Randolph with the Scotch left must have been near St Ninian's; had they been posted farther off, Randolph's infantry could not have moved fast enough to intercept the English cavalry.

453. *household*: feudal retainers.

XIX. *The night before the battle.*

484. *Demayet*: a height among the Ochill Hills, north-east of Stirling; on modern maps it is usually named Dun Myatt.

486. *links of silver bright*: the famous Links of Forth—a name given to the winding course of the river below Stirling.

494. *to plain**: fated to lament.

XX—XXI. *Morning.—The armies are arrayed for battle.*

511. *bittern's hum*: the deep note (often called the 'boom') of the bittern, a kind of heron.

516. *pipe-clang and bugle-sound*: Scott tells us that "there is an old tradition that the well-known Scottish tune of 'Hey, tutti taiti' was Bruce's march at the battle of Bannockburn. The tradition, true or false, has been the means of securing to Scotland one of the finest lyrics

in the language, the celebrated war-song of Burns,—*Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled*,"—which was composed to the tune 'Hey, tutti taiti.' Horns however are the only music mentioned by Barbour, and it has been doubted whether Bruce's army were cheered by the sound even of a solitary bagpipe.

522. *battalia*: battle array.

524. "Upon the 24th of June the English army advanced to the attack. The narrowness of the Scottish front, and the nature of the ground, did not permit them to have the full advantage of their numbers, nor is it very easy to find out what was their proposed order of battle. The vanguard, however, appeared a distinct body consisting of archers and spearmen on foot, and commanded, as already said, by the Earls of Gloucester and Hereford. Barbour, in one place, mentions that they formed nine battles, or divisions; but it appears that there was no room or space for them to extend themselves, so that, except the vanguard, the whole army appeared to form one solid and compact body."—*Scott*.

531. *phalanx*: a body of troops drawn up in a dense, deep battalion.

536. *spurs had first braced on*: they had recently been made knights, and hoped to prove in the battle their right to wear the knightly gilded spurs.

540. *De Valence*: see note on II. 481, VI. 22.

552. *bare-foot Abbot*: "Maurice, abbot of Inchaffray, placing himself on an eminence, celebrated mass in sight of the Scottish army. He then passed along the front, bare-footed, and bearing a crucifix in his hands, and exhorting the Scots in a few and forcible words, to combat for their rights and their liberty. The Scots kneeled down. 'They yield,' cried Edward: 'see, they implore mercy.'—'They do,' answered Ingelram de Umfraville, 'but not ours. On that field they will be victorious, or die.'"—Hailes, *Annals of Scotland*, II. 47.

558. *Earl Gilbert*: Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, a grandson of Edward I. See note on line 798.

XXII—XXIII. *The battle begins. The English archers cut down by the Scotch cavalry.*

580. *chivalry**: cavalry. "The English archers commenced the attack with their usual bravery and dexterity. But against a force, whose importance he had learned by fatal experience, Bruce was provided. A small but select body of cavalry were detached from the

right, under command of Sir Robert Keith. They rounded, as I conceive, the marsh called Milntown bog, and, keeping the firm ground, charged the left flank and rear of the English archers. As the bowmen had no spears, nor long weapons, fit to defend themselves against horse, they were instantly thrown into disorder, and spread through the whole English army a confusion, from which they never fairly recovered.

“Although the success of this manœuvre was evident, it is very remarkable that the Scottish generals do not appear to have profited by the lesson. Almost every subsequent battle which they lost against England was decided by the archers, to whom the close and compact array of the Scottish phalanx afforded an exposed and unresisting mark. The bloody battle of Halidoun-hill, fought scarce twenty years afterwards, was so completely gained by the archers, that the English are said to have lost only one knight, one esquire, and a few foot-soldiers. At the battle of Neville’s Cross, in 1346, where David II was defeated and made prisoner, John de Graham, observing the loss which the Scots sustained from the English bowmen, offered to charge and disperse them, if a hundred men-at-arms were put under his command. ‘*But*, to confess the truth,’ says Fordun, ‘he could not procure a single horseman for the service proposed.’ Of such little use is experience in war, where its results are opposed by habits or prejudice.”—*Scott*.

589. *wild-fire*: will o’ the wisp; see v. 402.

591. *the rest*: a socket into which the spear was fitted when it was *couched* for the charge (II. 505, VI. 366, 640).

603. *barbed**: protected by armour.

612. *Sherwood*: a forest in the north of Nottinghamshire, famous as a haunt of Robin Hood. (See Scott’s *Ivanhoe*.) The forest formerly stretched almost as far as to *Wakefield* in Yorkshire.

XXIV—XXVII. *The English cavalry charge is checked by the pits dug by Bruce’s command. A desperate fight follows.*

627. *baldric*: belt. “Roger Ascham quotes a similar Scottish proverb, ‘whereby they gave the whole praise of shooting honestly to Englishmen, saying thus, “that every English archer beareth under his girdle twenty-four Scottes.”’ Indeed Toxophilus says before, and truly, of the Scottish nation, ‘The Scottes surely be good men of warre in theyr owne feates as can be; but as for shootinge, they can neither use it to any profite, nor yet challenge it for any praise.’—Ascham’s *Toxophilus*.

"It is said, I trust incorrectly, by an ancient English historian, that the 'good Lord James of Douglas' dreaded the superiority of the English archers so much, that when he made any of them prisoner, he gave him the option of losing the forefinger of his right hand, or his right eye, either species of mutilation rendering him incapable to use the bow."—*Scott*.

636. *many a pit*: "It is generally alleged by historians that the English men-at-arms fell into the hidden snare which Bruce had prepared for them. Barbour does not mention the circumstance. According to his account, Randolph, seeing the slaughter made by the cavalry on the right wing among the archers, advanced courageously against the main body of the English, and entered into close combat with them. Douglas and Stuart, who commanded the Scottish centre, led their division also to the charge, and the battle, becoming general along the whole line, was obstinately maintained on both sides for a long space of time; the Scottish archers doing great execution among the English men-at-arms, after the bowmen of England were dispersed."—*Scott*.

649. *gorge**: throat—the jaws of destruction.

652. *acton*: a stuffed and quilted jacket, worn under mail.

656. *steeds that shriek*: "I have been told that this line requires an explanatory note; and, indeed, those who witness the silent patience with which horses submit to the most cruel usage, may be permitted to doubt, that, in moments of sudden or intolerable anguish, they utter a most melancholy cry. It was my fortune, upon one occasion, to hear a horse, in a moment of agony, utter a thrilling scream, which I still consider the most melancholy sound I ever heard."—*Scott*.

657–60. This striking simile had been used before by Scott in the *Lady of the Lake*, VI. xviii:—

"As Bracklinn's chasm, so black and steep,
Receives her roaring linn,
As the dark caverns of the deep
Suck the wild whirlpool in:
So did the deep and darksome pass
Devour the battle's mingled mass."

669. *De Brotherton*: the second son of Edward I, called Thomas of Brotherton from his birthplace.

670. *De Vere*: for the glories of the House of De Vere, Earl of Oxford, see Macaulay's *History of England*, ch. viii.

671–5. Besides Sir Maurice de Berkley (see note on line 95) his father Thomas, Baron de Berkley, was made prisoner in the battle.

John Baron de Bottetourt was admiral of the fleet in this expedition. For Humphrey de Bohun, Earl of Hereford, see notes on lines 361, 524, 907. Henry de Percy was the first baron of that name and the founder of the family of Percy of Alnwick in Northumberland, which became so famous in the Border wars.

677. See Table on p. xxv.

679. The victory of *Cressy* was gained in 1346, and of *Poitiers* in 1356.

715-7. Lines probably suggested by Cowper:—

“All these, life’s rambling journey done,
Have found their home, the grave.”

XXVIII. *Charge of the men of Carrick and the Isles.*

740. *Ailsa Rock*: Ailsa Craig, a rock which rises in precipitous cliffs from the sea about 10 miles off the Carrick coast; its summit is 1100 feet above the sea. “When the engagement between the main bodies had lasted some time Bruce made a decisive movement, by bringing up the Scottish reserve. It is traditionally said, that at this crisis, he addressed the Lord of the Isles in a phrase used as a motto by some of his descendants, ‘My trust is constant in thee.’ Barbour intimates, that the reserve ‘assembled on one field,’ that is, on the same line with the Scottish forces already engaged; which leads Lord Hailes to conjecture that the Scottish ranks must have been much thinned by slaughter, since, in that circumscribed ground, there was room for the reserve to fall into the line. But the advance of the Scottish cavalry must have contributed a good deal to form the vacancy occupied by the reserve.”—*Scott*.

749. *Innisgail*: islands of the Gaels.

758. *red-cross shield*: Argentine bore on his coat-of-arms eight crosses and three chalices.

XXIX—XXX. *Argentine rallies the English; Edith, thinking the Islemen in peril, breaks her silence and calls the camp-followers to their aid.*

781. *clerk*: this name included the inferior orders of ecclesiastics (deacons &c.) as well as priests.

787. *impeach*: accuse, reproach.

798. “The followers of the Scottish camp observed, from the Gillies’ Hill in the rear, the impression produced upon the English

army by the bringing up of the Scottish reserve, and prompted by the enthusiasm of the moment, or the desire of plunder, assumed, in a tumultuary manner, such arms as they found nearest, fastened sheets to tent-poles and lances, and shewed themselves like a new army advancing to battle.

“The unexpected apparition, of what seemed a new army, completed the confusion which already prevailed among the English, who fled in every direction, and were pursued with immense slaughter. The brook of Bannock, according to Barbour, was so choked with the bodies of men and horses, that it might have been passed dry-shod. The followers of the Scottish camp fell upon the disheartened fugitives, and added to the confusion and slaughter. Many were driven into the Forth, and perished there, which, by the way, could hardly have happened, had the armies been drawn up east and west, since, in that case, to get at the river, the English fugitives must have fled through the victorious army. About a short mile from the field of battle is a place called the Bloody Folds. Here the Earl of Gloucester is said to have made a stand, and died gallantly at the head of his own military tenants and vassals. He was much regretted by both sides; and it is said the Scottish would gladly have saved his life, but, neglecting to wear his surcoat with armorial bearings over his armour, he fell unknown, after his horse had been stabbed with spears.”

“Sir Marmaduke Twenge, an English knight, contrived to conceal himself during the fury of the pursuit, and when it was somewhat slackened, approached King Robert. ‘Whose prisoner are you, Sir Marmaduke?’ said Bruce, to whom he was personally known. ‘Yours, sir,’ answered the knight. ‘I receive you,’ answered the king, and, treating him with the utmost courtesy, loaded him with gifts, and dismissed him without ransom. The other prisoners were all well treated. There might be policy in this, as Bruce would naturally wish to acquire the good opinion of the English barons, who were at this time at great variance with their king. But it also well accords with his high chivalrous character.”—*Scott*.

XXXI. Rout of the English, who mistake the camp-followers for a fresh army.

808. *their hapless prince*: “Edward II, according to the best authorities, shewed, in the fatal field of Bannockburn, personal gallantry not unworthy of his great sire and greater son. He remained on the

field till forced away by the Earl of Pembroke, when all was lost. He then rode to the Castle of Stirling, and demanded admittance; but the governor remonstrating upon the imprudence of shutting himself up in that fortress, which must so soon surrender, he assembled around his person five hundred men-at-arms, and, avoiding the field of battle and the victorious army, fled towards Linlithgow, pursued by Douglas with about sixty horse. They were augmented by Sir Lawrence Abernethy with twenty more, whom Douglas met in the Torwood upon their way to join the English army, and whom he easily persuaded to desert the defeated monarch, and to assist in the pursuit. They hung upon Edward's flight as far as Dunbar, too few in number to assail him with effect, but enough to harass his retreat so constantly, that whoever fell an instant behind was instantly slain, or made prisoner. Edward's ignominious flight terminated at Dunbar, where the Earl of March, who still professed allegiance to him, 'received him full gently.' From thence the monarch of so great an empire, and the late commander of so gallant and numerous an army, escaped to Bamborough in a fishing vessel."—*Scott*.

819. *gage**: see note on III. 93.

XXXII—XXXIV. *Death of Argentine.*

850. *cuish**: pieces of armour to protect the thighs.

878-9. *Lord Earl*: Argentine still refuses Bruce the title of King. *my Sovereign's charge*: the duty of protecting my Sovereign.

893. *late-wake**: the ceremony of watching by the body of one dead with lighted torches (895) or tapers.

XXXV. *The losses of the English.*

907. *so sad a field*: "Barbour says that two hundred pairs of gilded spurs were taken from the field of battle; and that some were left the author can bear witness, who has in his possession a curious antique spur, dug up in the morass, not long since. 'In sum, there were slain, along with the Earl of Gloucester, forty-two barons and bannerets. The number of earls, barons, and bannerets made captive, was twenty-two, and sixty-eight knights. Many clerks and esquires were also there slain or taken. Roger de Northburge, keeper of the king's signet (*Custos Targiæ Domini Regis*), was made prisoner with his two clerks, Roger de Wakenfelde and Thomas de Switon, upon which the king caused a seal

to be made, and entitled it his *privy seal*, to distinguish the same from the signet so lost. The Earl of Hereford was exchanged against Bruce's queen, who had been detained in captivity ever since the year 1306. The *Targia*, or signet, was restored to England through the intercession of Ralph de Monthermer, ancestor of Lord Moira, who is said to have found favour in the eyes of the Scottish king.'—Continuation of Trivet's *Annals*, II. p. 14.

"Such were the immediate consequences of the field of Bannockburn. Its more remote effects in completely establishing the national independence of Scotland, afford a boundless field for speculation."—*Scott*.

XXXVI—XXXVII. Bruce gives orders for the marriage of Ronald and Edith at Cambuskenneth.

947. *Cambuskenneth*: an abbey just outside Stirling; it was one of David I's foundations.

Conclusion. (Lines 957-74.) *Stanzas in memory of the Duchess of Buccleuch.*

Harriet, Duchess of Buccleuch, died suddenly in September 1814. Scott, who always regarded the House of Buccleuch, the head of the Scott clan, with deep respect, was especially affected by her death because she had encouraged him to write his first long narrative poem, the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, which he dedicated to her. See p. xviii.

GLOSSARY.

Old English=English down to about 1200 A.D.

Middle English=English from about 1200 to 1500 A.D.

Scandinavian is the name of the group of languages spoken by the Norsemen, and including Icelandic, Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish. These languages, like English, Dutch, German, &c., belong to the **Teutonic** family.

Gaelic is a language of the **Celtic** family spoken in the Highlands and Western Isles of Scotland.

Old French=French down to about 1600 A.D.

Abbreviations:—

adj. adjective.

part. participle.

adv. adverb.

subst. substantive.

Gaelic Names of Places. Most of the names of places in the Western Islands of Scotland and the adjacent mainland are of Gaelic origin. Among the words frequently used in their formation the following are especially noteworthy:—

Ben=mountain.

Loch=inlet of the sea, lake.

Dun=hill, fort.

More=great.

Glen=narrow valley.

Strath=broad valley.

Inch=island.

abye, verb, v. 656, to pay for, from Old English *abycgan*, to pay for, from *bycgan*, to buy.

Albyn, subst., I. 38, an ancient name of the island of Great Britain, but restricted in poetical usage to Scotland. It is said to be derived from Celtic *ailp-inn*, hilly island. Albion, a Greek and Latin name of the island, is another form of the same word.

amice, subst., properly, a folded square of white worn about the neck and shoulders by a priest when saying mass. In II. 426 it is used in the sense of a hood. From Latin *amictus*, a garment wrapped round one.

armada, subst., I. 374, V. 310, an armed fleet, a Spanish word; the French form of the word is *armée*, whence our *army*. From Lat. *arma*, arms.

ban, subst., II. 443, a curse, and verb, II. 534, to curse, from Old English *gebann*, a proclamation. The substantive is still used in the sense of a proclamation in the plural, *banns* of marriage.

barbed is properly used of arrows, meaning 'furnished with a *barb*' (the hook on the point of an arrow, from Lat. *barba*, beard); sometimes, as in VI. 603, it is used of horses, meaning 'protected with armour,' a sense which properly belongs to *barded*, Old French *barde* (armour to protect horses).

bard, subst., I. 36, a poet. Among the ancient Celts a *bard* was one who composed and sang verses especially in honour of princes or heroes, generally to the accompaniment of the harp.

basinet, VI. 319, a light helmet, fitting close to the head; different from the high-plumed helmet used in tilting. From Old French *bacinet*, diminutive of *basin*, a basin.

bay, subst., IV. 455: in Old English the phrase was 'held at a *bay*' or rather 'at *abay*,' from Old French *abois*, the *baying* or barking of hounds.

beadsman, subst., IV. 761, one employed to pray for a person, from Old English *bed*, a prayer, beads being so called because the beads on a rosary were used as a means of counting prayers.

bestow, verb, V. 539, to pack, conceal, a form of the verb *to stow*, with the intensive prefix *be-*.

bondsman, subst., I. 204, a serf, Old English *bonda*. This word, and *bondman*, *bondage*, are said to be derived not from *bond*, but from the Scandinavian *bondi*, a husbandman, which comes from the same root as *boor*.

boor, subst., I. 212, a peasant, a tiller of the soil,—an Old English word, which forms the second part of *neigh-bour* (one who dwells nigh). It is the same word as the Dutch *boer*, German *Bauer*.

bosk, subst., V. 423, a thicket, a Scandinavian word, from which *bush* also is derived. Hence adj. *bosky*, V. 535.

boune, verb, I. 586, VI. 119, to make ready to go, to make ready, from a Middle English adj. *boun*, ready to go, which in the form *bound* appears in such phrases as 'homeward bound.'

bourne, subst., a boundary, from French *borne*, a boundary. In V. 535 it is probably used for the sake of the rhyme, and it is difficult to assign an exact meaning to it.

bower, subst., (1) a chamber, especially the apartment of the lady of the house, II. 109; (2) an arbour or retreat formed by overarching trees, III. 611. From Old English *bûr*, a chamber.

brand, subst., a burning piece of wood; hence a sword-blade (so called from its brightness), II. 222. Old English *brand*, from *byrnan*, to burn.

brook, verb, I. 522, to put up with, allow, from Old English *brūcan*, to use, enjoy; from the same root as the Latin *frui* (to enjoy), *fructus* (fruit). Distinct in derivation from *brook*, a stream.

brunt, subst., V. 415, 527, VI. 109, shock, especially the *brunt* of battle, the shock of the enemy's onset; it is said to be an imitative word, i.e. the sound of the word is meant to imitate the sound of a shock or thud.

bugle-horn, subst., I. 227, the horn of a bugle, Old French *bugle*, from Lat. *buculus*, a diminutive of *bos*. We now use *bugle* in the sense of a bugle's horn, I. 33, 505.

caitiff, subst., III. 414, a mean fellow; Old French *caitif* (Modern French *chétif*), from Latin *captivus*, a captive.

canon, subst., II. 525, an ecclesiastical law, from Latin *canon*, Greek *κανών*, a straight rod (hence canon or cannon = a gun-barrel, a gun), a rule or law.

career, subst., VI. 378, 832, the course of a horse in a charge, French *carrière*, from Old French *cariere*, a road, which is derived from the Celtic *car*, a car.

casque, subst., I. 587, helmet, from Spanish *casco*, a skull, a cask, a helmet. *Casque* and *cask* are therefore the same word.

cheer, subst., expression, I. 370, II. 45, 72, III. 22; joyful expression (hence comes the adj. *cheerful*); good fare, food, III. 255—a favourite word of Scott's—from Middle English *chere*, face, which is derived through French from the late Latin *cara*, face.

chivalry, subst., a company of mounted knights (VI. 580, 632); hence, the spirit of honour which arose among the knights of the Middle Ages. Old French *chevalerie*, from Lat. *caballus*, a horse; *cavalry* is another form of the same word.

coil, subst., I. 45, V. 9, noise, trouble; originally a slang expression, probably derived from *coil*, to gather, to twist, which comes through French *cueillir*, from Latin *colligere*, to collect.

corse, subst., VI. 391, a body. *Corse*, *corps*, *corpse* (Old French *corps*, *cors*) are all derived from Latin *corpus*, a body.

couch, verb, II. 505, VI. 366, to fix; French *coucher*, from Latin *collocare*, to place.

cresset, subst., I. 509, an open pot, used as a lamp, and placed on a beacon or carried on a pole; Old French *creuset*, from Dutch *kruyse*, a pot or *cruse*.

cuish, subst., VI. 850, 869, armour for the thighs, from French *cuisse*, the thigh, derived from Latin *coxa*, the hip.

dais, subst., II. 99, a raised floor in a hall—derived through the French from the Latin *discus*, which meant (1) a quoit, (2) a dish, (3) a table; *dais* therefore at first meant the table, not the raised floor on which it stood. *Dais*, *disc*, *desk*, *dish* are thus all derived from *discus*, which is itself derived from the Greek *δίσκος*, a quoit.

dan, subst., III. 613, a title of respect given to monks and others, from Latin *dominus*, lord.

devoted, past participle, doomed to destruction, VI. 100, 568; accursed, II. 538. *Devoted* generally means 'having given oneself up' to some object; but Latin *devovēre*, from which it is derived, often means 'to give a person over to the infernal deities,' i.e. to curse or doom him.

diapason, subst., I. 51, harmony; Greek *ἡ διὰ πασῶν τῶν χορδῶν συμφωνία*=the concord through all the notes of the scale, that is, concord at the interval of an octave, unison. In I. 51 however it is used less exactly, in the sense of harmony.

donjon, subst., V. 775, the keep of a castle, Old French *donjon*, from late Latin *domnio*, a keep, which is a contracted form of *dominio*, lordship; *dungeon*, which is another form of *donjon*, has acquired its present sense because the castle prison was in the cellars of the keep.

erst, adv., II. 55, once, superlative of *ere*, which originally meant 'soon': *erst* therefore meant 'soonest,' 'first.'

falchion, subst., III. 156, V. 344, a curved sword; through Italian from Latin *falcio*, a curved sword, which comes from *falx*, a sickle.

fallow, adj., III. 427, of a reddish colour; as applied to land it originally denoted the reddish colour of ploughed land. Old English *fealu*, yellowish, from the same root as Lat. *pallidus*, whence *pallid*, *pale*.

fell, (1) adj., I. 569, cruel, fierce, derived through the French from Latin *felo*, a malefactor; (2) subst., I. 9, a hill, Scandinavian *fell*.

forfend, verb, IV. 545, avert. The formation of the verb is unusual: it is a compound of the English prefix *for-* (seen in *for-bid* &c.) and *-fend*, which is a familiar abbreviation of *defend*, used in the sense

common in French *défendre*, to forbid—from Latin *defendere*, to protect. So *fence* (v. 265) is an abbreviated form of *defence*.

gage, verb, II. 115, to pledge or wager; subst., II. 495, VI. 819, a pledge, an undertaking to fight, from Old French *gage* or *wage*, a pledge—derived either from Latin *vas*, a pledge, or from a Teutonic word formed from the same root. *Wages*, *wage*, verb, II. 496, *wager*, all come from the same root.

galla-glass, subst., I. 211, Irish *galloglach*, ‘a foreign soldier’—a name given by the Irish to the heavy-armed English settlers, or similarly armed soldiers in the service of the Irish chiefs.

gaud, subst., I. 229, an ornament; from Latin *gaudium*, joy, (in late Latin) a large bead on a rosary.

glaive, subst., VI. 245, a sword; Old French *glaive*, from Latin *gladius*.

gorge, subst., VI. 649, a throat; hence comes its more common sense of a narrow pass or defile. French *gorge*, throat.

griesly, adj., III. 338, v. 633, terrible, from Old English *grīsan*, to shudder; connected with *gruesome*.

guerdon, subst., I. 63, reward, Old French *guerdon*, from the late Latin *widerdonum*, a curious hybrid formed from the German *wider*, back again, and Latin *donum*, a gift.

halidome, subst., III. 272, holiness, honour, Old English *hāligdōm*, from *hālig*, holy.

harness, subst., v. 167, a soldier’s body-armour, Old French *harneis*, from Breton *harnex*, iron.

hauberk, subst., I. 340, v. 184, a coat of mail, or chain-armour, Old French *hauberc*, from Old High German *hals*, neck, and *bergan*, to protect; it was therefore originally armour to protect the neck.

haught, adj., I. 627, haughty, Old French *haut*, from Latin *altus*, high.

helm, subst., III. 93, a helmet, Old English *helm*. *Helmet* is a diminutive of *helm*, formed with the French suffix *-et*.

ken, verb, III. 431, to know, to discern, a Scandinavian word connected with English *can* and *know*.

lair, subst., IV. 84, den, ground, Old English *leger*, a lair, couch, bed, from *licgan*, to lie down.

late-wake, subst., VI. 893, a corruption of *lyke-wake*, a watching over a corpse, from Old English *lic*, a body, and *wacian*, to watch.

lee, subst., shelter, I. 496; the side of a ship away from the wind, I. 299, from the Scandinavian *hle*, a shelter. *Lea*=meadow (I. 554) comes from Old English *ledh*, a meadow.

liege lord originally meant 'a free or independent lord'; Old French *lige*, from German *ledig*, free; but from a notion that it was derived from Latin *ligatus*, bound, its meaning was changed to 'faithful, loyal'; thus the king's *lieges* from meaning 'his free men' came to mean 'his faithful men.' In II. 363 *liege lord* means 'feudal lord'; so *liege*, III. 191.

list, (1) verb, to choose, to desire, to please, I. 540, III. 497; from Old English *lust*, pleasure. (2) verb, to hearken, I. 37, 55; *listen* is another form of the same verb; from Old English *hlyst*, hearing.

lour, subst., I. 421, frown, from Middle English *louren*, to frown. The word is usually spelt *lower*, and used as a verb.

lurcher, subst., v. 556, one who hides himself, from the verb *lurch*, a weakened form of *lurk*.

mail, subst., VI. 265, steel network forming body-armour, French *maille*, from Latin *macula*, a spot, mesh.

mazer, subst., v. 798, a large drinking-bowl, from Old High German *masar*, maple-wood. Mazers were so called because they were often made of maple-wood.

minstrel, subst., I. 60, one who recites verses to the accompaniment of music, Old French *menestrel*, from Latin *minister*, a servant.

oriel, subst., III. 20, a recess or small chamber, especially the recess at the end of a hall, where the lord and his family dined; it was lighted by a large window such as we call an oriel window, or simply an oriel; Old French *oriol*, from Latin *aurum*, gold, because the recess often had a gilded ceiling.

palfrey, subst., IV. 423, VI. 317, a saddle-horse, French *palefroi*, Latin *paraveredus*, from Greek *παρά* (beside) and Latin *veredus*, a post-horse; originally therefore 'an extra post-horse.'

pall, subst., I. 622, IV. 589, a cloak, rich cloth, Old English *pæll*, purple cloth, from Latin *palla*, a cloak.

pallet, subst., IV. 588, a straw mattress, French *paillet*, diminutive of *paille*, straw, from Latin *palea*, straw.

palmer, subst., VI. 40, one who carries a palm-branch in token of having been on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

plain, subst., IV. 235, mourning, lamentation, French *plainte*, from Latin *plangere*, to lament. *Plain* is properly the verb, as in VI. 494, and *plaint* the subst.

pledge, subst., II. 24, 61, a surety, a toast or health (regarded as an assurance of affection): from Old French *plege*, a surety. Hence to *impledge* (I. 196) is to give assurance of, to promise.

plight, (1) subst., IV. 364, V. 26, pledge, promise; (2) verb, I. 105, V. 29, to promise, betroth; in III. 575 *plight* is the past participle, and in VI. 144 the past tense; from Old English *pliht*, risk, danger.

port, subst., V. 670, a gate, Latin *porta*, whence also *portal*. Distinct from *port*, a harbour, Latin *portus*, V. 766, and *port*, bearing, demeanour, from Latin *portare*, to carry.

portcullis, subst., I. 589, a sliding door, Old French *porte coulisse*, from Latin *porta*, gate, and *colare*, to strain through a sieve, to flow.

postern, subst., I. 508, a back door or private entrance; through French from Latin *post*, behind.

requiem, subst., II. 565, a mass for the repose of the soul of a dead person; *requiem* (rest) is the first word of an anthem in the mass: 'Give them eternal rest, O Lord.'

rood, subst., II. 422, a cross—the same word as *rod*, but used only in the senses of (1) a cross, (2) a measure of land.

rout, subst., a crowd, I. 376, II. 124; a defeat, I. 486, III. 590; French *route*, a defeat, a broken multitude of men, a crowd, from Latin *rumpere*, to break, from which also comes *route*, a way broken through a forest, a road, III. 262.

russet, adj., I. 3, reddish-brown, French *rousset*, a diminutive of *roux*, red, from Latin *russus*, reddish.

scapulare, subst., VI. 35, a scarf worn across the shoulders by monks and nuns, from Lat. *scapulae*, the shoulder-blades.

scathe, subst., II. 210, injury, from Scandinavian *skatha*, harm; hence *scatheless*, adj., I. 361, unharmed; *scathed*, past part., V. 611, ruined, blasted. German *Schade* is from the same root.

scutcheon, subst., II. 539, a painted shield; shortened from *escutcheon*, Old French *escusson*, from Latin *scutum*, a shield.

selcouth, adj., IV. 314, strange, literally 'seldom-known,' from Old English *seld*, rarely, and *cuth*, known (compare *un-couth*).

selle, subst., III. 566, VI. 341, a seat, French *selle*, from Latin *sella*, a seat.

seneschal, subst., I. 633, II. 90, a steward, the chief servant of a household, Old French *seneschal*, from Gothic *sin*, old, and *skalks*, servant.

sheen, adj., IV. 338, bright, Old English *scēne*, fair.

sooth, subst., I. 306, truth, Old English *sōth*.

southern, adj. used as subst., a Southerner, V. 419, where it does not take the sign of the plural, contrary to the general usage, for we say the *ancients*, the *Jacobites*, the *Germans*. Exceptions such as the

French are probably due to a desire to avoid an awkward combination of sounds.

squire, subst., I. 600, a shield-bearer, a gentleman attending on a knight; shortened from *esquire*, Old French *escuyer*, from Latin *scutum*, shield.

stark, adj., stiff, strong, I. 608, Old English *stearc*; compare German *stark*.

stole, subst., II. 564, a vestment in the shape of a scarf worn by a priest, Latin *stola*, from Greek *στολή*, a robe. In II. 411 Scott uses the word *black-stoled* more vaguely, in the sense of 'black-robed.'

strait, adj., I. 592, narrow, through Old French *estreit* (=modern French *étroit*), from Latin *strictus*, strait, *strict*. Distinct from *straight*, direct, which is Old English *streht*, stretched.

sung, past tense of *sing* (I. 46). Some think that this form comes from the plural of the Old English past tense (which was *sungon*, while the singular was *sang*), but it is more probably due to the influence of the past participle *sung*. *rung*, *sprung*, *sunk* (I. 47, 447, II. 518) are similar instances.

swarth, I. 179, *swart*, II. 193, adj., black, dark, Old English *sweart*; German *schwarz* is from the same root.

term, subst., VI. 74, 84, a limit of time, French *terme*, from Latin *terminus*, a boundary-line, limit,—a word which we have borrowed directly from the Latin in the sense of a railway *terminus*.

tourney, subst., IV. 382, a tournament, the words being derived respectively from Old French *tourney*, *tournoiement*, both from Old French *torner*, to turn—in reference to the swift turnings of the horses.

trick, verb, I. 328, to adorn, from the subst. *trick*, a clever contrivance, which is the Dutch *treke*, a trick.

truncheon, subst., VI. 322, 558, a staff, French *tronson*, diminutive of *tronc*, the trunk of a tree, Latin *truncus*.

vaward, subst., VI. 236, the van-ward or van-guard, Old French *avant-ward*. See *ward*.

veil, more properly spelt *vail*, verb, I. 284, to lower, especially to lower (a mast or flag) as a token of respect; from French *aval*, which is now limited to the sense of 'to swallow,' but formerly had the more general meaning of 'to put down,' being derived from the Latin *ad vallem*, to the valley.

vouch, verb, I. 153, to warrant, assert, Old French *voucher*, to call to one's aid in a lawsuit, from Latin *vocare*, to call.

ward, subst., I. 596, III. 123, watching; a part of a castle defence,

v. 751; *guard*, III. 122, is derived through French *garde*, from German *warten*, which comes from the same root as the Old English *weard*.

wassail, subst., I. 376, 424, revelry, from Old English *wæs hæl*=be hale! may you be in good health!—a customary salutation at feasts.

wight, adj., VI. 315, 625, active, nimble, strong, from Scandinavian *vigr*, fit for war; distinct from *wight*, a human being, which is from Old English *wiht*, a creature.

wilder, verb, I. 406, 515, to perplex, originally 'to lead into a wilderness' (Middle English *wildern*, a wilderness); *bewilder* (formed with prefix *be-*) is the form in common use.

wind, verb, to fill with *wind*, to blow (a horn); it is distinct in derivation from *wind*, to coil or encircle; it is properly a weak verb (past tense and part. *winded*, IV. 469): but in I. 33, 505, Scott gives it the form properly belonging to the strong verb, *wound*.

wold, subst., I. 360, 553, a down, an open unenclosed district, from Old English *weald*, a wood, a forest.

yore, subst., I. 36, old times, Old English *geára* (genitive plural of *geár*, a year), meaning 'in past years.'

